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Dance and Dancers

SEPTEMBER 1960

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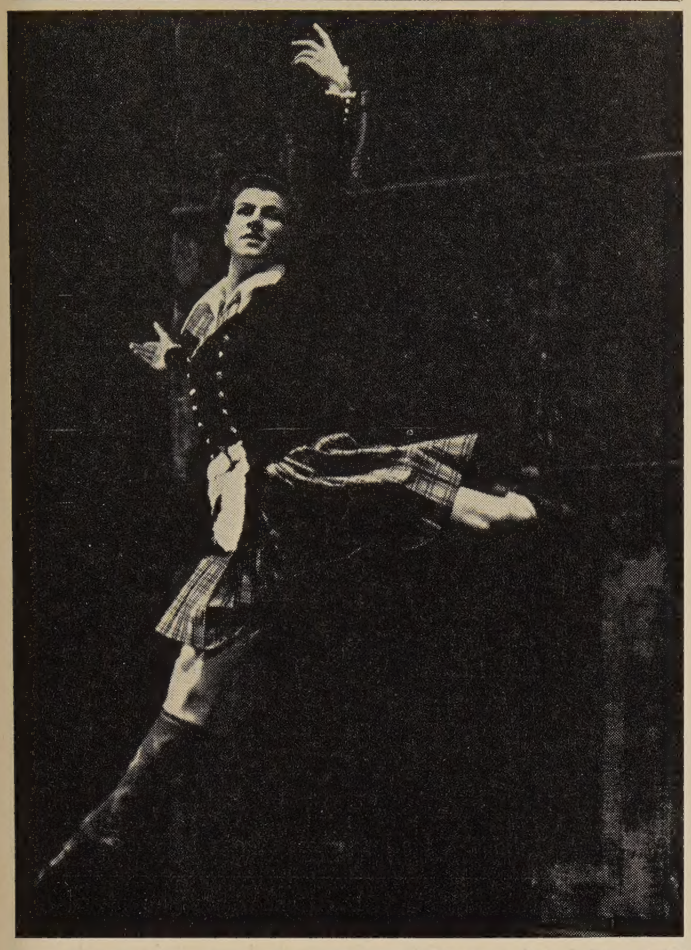

Photo: John Blomfield.

FLEMMING FLINDT

WHEN Borge Ralov retired from the Royal Danish Ballet a few years ago he was among the great male dancers of the world; but despite visits with the company to London and New York, Ralov's reputation did not extend far beyond the confines of Copenhagen. Perhaps this is a clue as to why so many of the succeeding generation of Danish male dancers have had a wanderlust that has carried them far from Denmark. Poul Gnatt laid the foundations of an international reputation soon after the war, and he was followed by Frank Schaufuss and, most notably, Erik Bruhn. Bruhn has become one of the idols of American ballets, and set a new pattern for the aspiring Danish male dancer. It is a pattern in which Denmark's latest great gift to male dancing, Flemming Flindt, finds himself much at home.

Flindt was always a brilliantly promising dancer. Even when he was only in the graduation class of the Royal Theatre his immense talent was unmistakable. He was the kind of dancer about whom one never asked "whether" but only "when". His big chance came in England as a member of London's Festival Ballet. Here, on extended leave of absence from Copenhagen, he developed from a fledgling into—forgive the mixed metaphors—a star. The one major set-back to his career came two years ago when he injured his knee. After an operation in Copenhagen, he returned to the Royal Danish Ballet where rumour said he was dancing better than ever. As all who saw his recent guest appearances with the Ballet Rambert will know, rumour did not lie. Now, still in the grip of that same wanderlust, he has just signed a year's contract as *étoile* of the Paris Opéra Ballet, where he will be working with his former master, Harald Lander.

Flindt is the youngest of all the internationally established *premier danseurs*. He encompasses both the French style of Bournonville and the international "Russian" style which is the *lingua franca* of Western ballet. A gifted actor, a notable personality and a dazzling dance technique that already bids fair to hold its own with Bruhn's, he clearly has a great future before him.

SEPTEMBER 1960 11th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 11 No. 9

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

The Winter of your Content

IF there has been one continual moan that has wailed incessantly throughout the eleven years of *Dance and Dancers'* existence, then it has been from readers in the provinces that they just don't see enough ballet. Everything, they claimed, was concentrated upon London and they just got the meagre crumbs dropped reluctantly and occasionally from the master's table. Well, the time has now come for all that wailing to cease immediately.

Just turn to page 34 of this number and you will see that all the major companies are touring continually throughout the length and breadth of Britain until the end of the year and, as far as I can find out, well on into next year. The Royal Ballet's touring section, Ballet Rambert, Festival Ballet and Western Theatre Ballet are touching at almost every accessible point where there are theatres big enough to house them. This is not even considering smaller groups like Ballets Minerva and Harlequin Ballet who tour all those communities that have only small halls. You have asked for it and, by golly, you've got it. If these companies don't come to you again then the fault will undoubtedly be yours, because you will not have given them the support to make their return journey worthwhile.

Yes, I know that you are not getting Fonteyn and the main bulk of the company from Covent Garden because they are touring America. Anyway, it has been proved that it is now practically and financially impossible to house this company in the average provincial theatre. But you need not despair because you probably will never get such a close view of Fonteyn in performance as you can in the film of the Royal Ballet which, if it hasn't already, will be showing at some cinema near to you. Personally, I think that you never had it so good.

On the other hand, as things look at the moment, London never had it so bad — balletwise. Of course, companies have a habit of suddenly turning up and doubtless before the winter is out we shall have seen several Spanish companies, manifestations from the Far East, groups of Folklore companies from the Balkans and a thousand Hottentots revealing all the secrets of their way of life — not to mention those long-promised companies from outer space crouching and wriggling to supersonic nuclear *musique concrète*. Of course, like everything to do with ballet organisation it's a case of all or nuttin' and London is just about to embark on a "nuttin" period. The only thing I hope is that it just doesn't go on for so long that we become completely enamoured of opera, football, hunting or even the much disputed English appearance of bullfighting that we lose altogether the taste for the choreographic art and never want to return.

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31 WED (M)	Swan Lake, Act II	13 TUE	Les Sylphides
	Romeo and Juliet	14 WED (M)	Etudes
	Grand Pas de Deux	14 WED (E)	London Morning
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Prospectus from The Secretary

Visitors in Midlothian

ALTHOUGH the first week of this year's Edinburgh Festival is occupied by the Royal Ballet, whose main interest will be in the all-Stravinsky programme during the first half of the week, the remaining two weeks are given over to foreign companies.

Following the Royal Ballet will be Susana and Jose (in Enkelmann's picture top right) who have already been seen several times in England but whose first visit to Edinburgh this is. They have developed the form of Spanish dance concert presentation to a fine art. They are followed by the Little Ballet Troupe of India (in the pictures below) who bring a rather new approach to Indian dance presentation in that they present stories and legends of their native country mainly through the medium of its folk dance though the classical schools are still the basis of their art. This young group was formed by Shan Bardhan, a former pupil of Uday Shankar, in 1952, and has enjoyed a great success in India as well as on its recent tour of Europe and other places.

For the final week of the festival comes the company formed and directed by Leonide Massine for this year's Festival of Nervi in Genoa. For this festival, Massine created a number of new works as well as reviving some old ones. The principal creation was his full-evening version of *The Decameron* and two principals — Milorad Miskovitch, as Nastagio, with Nicole Nogaret, as Traversari — are seen in Lido's picture top left. This work, with music arranged by Claudio Arrieu and designed by Alfred Manessier, will be given in Edinburgh as well as a revival of Massine's symphonic ballet, *Choreartium,* and his *Le Beau Danube.* The company, Ballet Europeen, has many famous dancers from various parts of the world.

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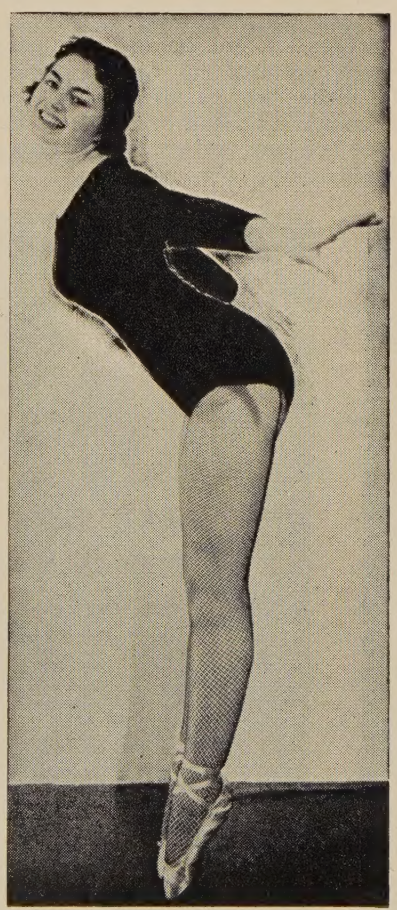

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HARVEST AT KAKOSSA *(above, left): Members of the company in harvest dances given during November. The rice has ripened, the men cut the stalks and the women bind the sheaves; they celebrate the good harvest with a fiesta.*

MIDNIGHT *(above, right): A scene from an epic poem, with a strong similarity to* Giselle, *choreographed by Keita Fodeba. The picture shows the death of Sona from poisoning.*

LONDON'S SUMMER DANCING : 3

Dancers from a new Republic

SINCE the war, London has seen many Negro companies including that of Katherine Dunham and groups from Africa. Although this company, which comes to the Piccadilly Theatre, is called Ballets Africains it is not in fact the same company as the others bearing that title and which have visited England over the past few years. This one comes from the Republic of Guinea, previously French Guinea, and emerged just after the country had established its independence in 1958. The great leader of the Democratic party, Sekou Toure, encouraged the youth of the country to take stock of their cultural inheritance and to preserve it. Gradually people started to take a pride in their traditional dances, music and songs and it was from this that the present company, of which Kante Facell is the Artistic Director, developed into a definite theatrical shape.

The many numbers reflect the life and customs of the people as well as the realisation in dance of its folklore and epic poems. The famous French designer, François Ganeau, has been responsible for the settings and costumes.

FERE KOROBA *(below, left): Male dancers in dances given during the initiation of young girls into the secrets of life.*

BIRD MEN *(below, right): Bird men are the guardians of public morals who patrol the land at night. Anyone caught misbehaving is carried off and made to answer for their behaviour.*

THEN : An engraving from Beauties de l'Opéra *of the opening scene from* La Sylphide *when it was given at the Paris Opéra in 1832.*

La Sylphide

First given by Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on July 20, 1960. Ballet in two acts choreographed by August Bournonville (1836) reproduced by Elsa Marianne von Rosen with additional original material by Ellen Price de Plane. Music by Lovenskjold arranged by Poul London. Designed by Robin and Christopher Ironside.

NOW : One hundred and twenty-eight years later and Ballet Rambert give the first British production of the famous Romantic ballet. Shirley Dixon as Effie (left) and Flemming Flindt as James are seen leading the company in a reel from the first act. Photo : John Blomfield.

Cast

James ..... FLEMMING FLINDT
La Sylphide
ELSA MARIANNE VON ROSEN
Anna, James's Mother VALERIE MARSH
Effie, James's fiancée ... SHIRLEY DIXON
Gurn, a farmhand JOHN CHESWORTH
Nancy, Effie's friend THELMA LITSTER
Madge, a Witch GILLIAN MARTLEW
Two Village Boys ..... JOHN O'BRIEN, KENNETH BANNERMAN
Three Sylphides ... JUNE SANDBROOK, JENNIFER KELLY, RACHEL HOLLAND
Corps de Ballet of Villagers and Sylphs

PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

LET us start by getting two points clear. The first is that this ballet is called *La Sylphide* — it is not called *The Sylph* or *The Sylph of the Glen* or even *The Stag at Bay* or *Comin' thro' the Rye*. Since 1832 it has been called *La Sylphide*, and whatever the Ballet Rambert wish to call their new baby, so far as this magazine is concerned it always will be known as *La Sylphide*. If the Ballet Rambert is afraid of confusion with *Les Sylphides* (what kind of public are they trying to attract, anyhow — morons ?) let them call that *Chopiniana*. After all, Fokine did.

Secondly, the Ballet Rambert has rendered British ballet an immense service by acquiring *La Sylphide* for the national repertory. We have far too few ballet classics from the 19th century, and this present example not only has the historical significance of being the first of all Romantic ballets, but also it is among the most perfectly preserved specimens of Romantic choreography and production in existence. Our gratitude to Elsa Marianne von Rosen, and her husband Allan Fridericia, for mounting this work for us should be unbounded.

As I discussed the origins and history of *La Sylphide* last month, I do not propose to go through it again. However there is just one point that I feel should be stressed. This production is, of course, based on the 1836 version of *La Sylphide* made by August Bournonville in Copenhagen for the Royal Danish Ballet. Bournonville's production was quite different from the original Paris production, choreographed by Fillipo Taglioni for his daughter Marie in 1832. The music was different (the Danes were unable to pay the copyright fees demanded by the first composer, Schneitzhoeffer, and had to commission new music from Lovenskjold) and the choreography was — so far as is known — completely new. What in fact was retained consisted of Nourrit's scenario and the general spirit of the ballet. All this is common knowledge, but I have been a little disquieted by the suggestion made in quite a number of quarters, that the Bournonville version was in some way inferior to the original. This I feel is most dubious.

Of course, in that the rôle of La Sylphide was danced in Paris by Marie Taglioni and in Copenhagen by Lucile Grahn, there can be little doubt as to the superiority of the Paris production. Yet Bournonville ranks with Perrot, Petipa and Ivanov as one of the great masters of 19th-century choreography, whereas Fillipo Taglioni (and here admittedly we are judging solely on repute) would hardly find a place among that company. I must say that the overwhelming probability is that the Bournonville ballet was far finer than the Taglioni — for one thing Bournonville was a representative of

the French school at its best, and, as a corollary to this, the Franco-Danish choreographer had a far greater regard for male dancers than did his Parisian contemporaries, apart from Perrot. This alone would have set his work apart from most of the pot-boilers of the Romantic ballet, and as anyone who has seen the Royal Danish Ballet will bear witness, Bournonville's capacity for pure dance invention was incredibly rich by any standards you care to name. So any suggestion that with Bournonville's *La Sylphide* modern audiences are being fobbed off with something slightly inferior to the "real thing" is, to my mind, ridiculous.

The beauty of Bournonville's choreography lies in its delightful dance patterns, and its exploitation of the light and graceful French school. There is a buoyancy and charm about this dancing which is like no other, and Bournonville added to his natural inventiveness a sensitive feeling for folk dances, so that the spirit behind both his character and classical dances is identical, giving his ballets an unusual sense of choreographic unity. Another aspect of his work is the carefully contrived mime episodes. Bournonville mime is quite different from the stilted Anglo/Maryinsky mime found in British ballet. It is a good deal more naturalistic, it is also more musical, and it makes much more use of the complete body.

La Sylphide was possibly Bournonville's masterpiece. The dancing is perhaps more brilliant in *Napoli,* the mime is cleverer in that remarkable first act of *Far From Denmark,* and in some of his other ballets he possibly succeeded in devising sharper dance characterisations. Yet in *La Sylphide* he was working with a splendid scenario, and the whole ballet is the most consistent and perfect of all the Bournonville repertory.

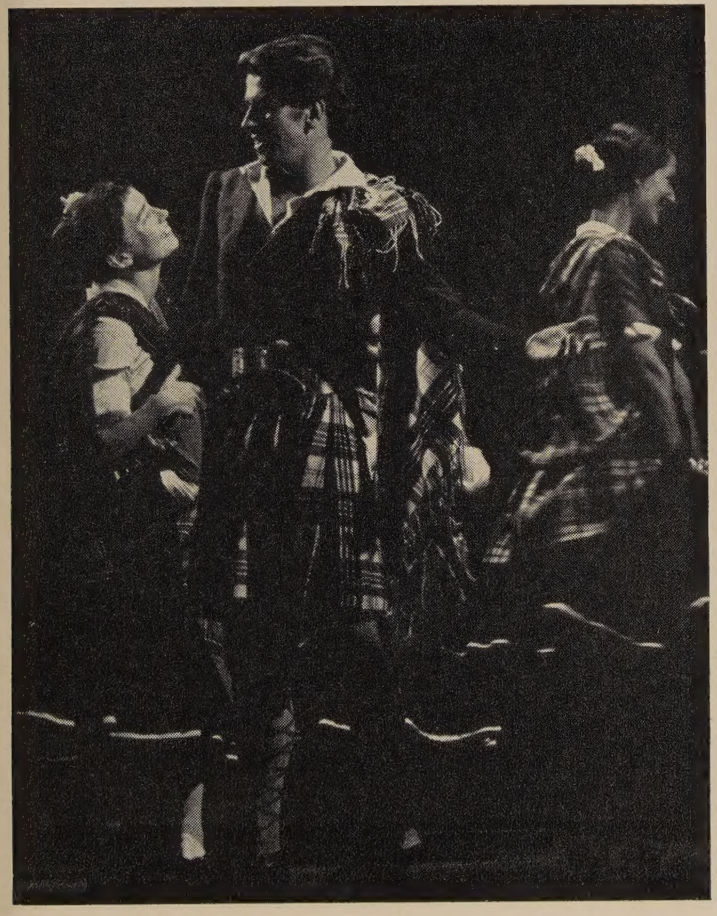
The first act is a wonderful example of ballet staging, admirably showing Bournonville's skill as a producer. In a sense a great deal of the act is given over to mime, but it is a type of choreographic mime almost indistinguishable from dancing. The fortune-telling episode, for example, is a gem of Romantic ballet, and the manner in which the Sylphide interrupts the wedding dances is exquisitely realised. These dances themselves, very broad transcriptions of Scottish national dances (completely dissimilar in detail from Highland dancing, yet surprisingly faithful in spirit) are neatly dovetailed into the action. The complete act manages to give an impression of Scottish domestic life with a remarkable realism that is even accentuated by the presence of the Sylphide herself. For all the fanciful magic, the ballet's background resembles a very detailed *genre* painting.

The second act is possibly less completely satisfying. The big dance *divertissement* for James and the assembled Sylphides, which comes early in the second scene, is very well choreographed, but nevertheless shows Bournonville's major weakness of merely interpolating dances that have little or nothing to do with the story, and the contrast here with *La Fille mal Gardée* or the second act of *Giselle* is worth noting. There is no *pas de deux* in *La Sylphide* as we would understand it. For most of the ballet James and the Sylphide never touch, and there are no supported lifts. Choreographically this act shows the same blend of dance and mime as does the first, although here the emphasis is rather more on the dancing. The story develops with a natural ease, and the ballet achieves a mounting climax of very real power.

Every moral has its story, and Bournonville was conscious of the symbolic implications of the ballet, as he showed when he wrote in his *Memoirs*: "Man's search for illusory happiness escapes him, leaving all his dreams unfulfilled, while his chance of happiness in real life is destroyed. This is the poetic truth in the ballet." For our generation Bournonville's "poetic truth" may have become debased into prosaic cliché, but undoubtedly the story holds our attention, even though perhaps the glories of the ballet are its choreography and production.

The music by the Norwegian composer Herman Lovenskjold is not, however, of the highest quality, yet it is tuneful and carries with it the tinkle of fading period charm that is perfectly appropriate. It makes use of a few old Scottish airs, and probably shows the influence of Weber. Very little is known of Lovenskjold, except that he was born in Norway in 1815, was brought to Copenhagen by his parents in 1827 and died there in 1870. *La Sylphide,* written when he was 21, seems to have been the only piece of his music that has survived to the present day. The present arrangement by Poul London is not particularly effective, and it was a mistake to include the full overture at the first performance, although this was later rectified and a shorter version employed. But for all the faults of the music, I am surprised to find that a number of people are saying that this score is inferior to the Schneitzheoffer original. Having heard this earlier

THE TWO LOVES OF JAMES: Flemming Flindt, as James, with his prospective bride, Effie, played by Shirley Dixon, and, in the right-hand picture, with his supernatural love, the Sylphide, played by Elsa Marianne von Rosen. Photos: John Blomfield.



version some dozen or so times when it was in the repertory of Les Ballets de Champs Elysees, I should have thought the Danish score had a slight edge over the French one on almost every count. It is more tuneful, far more "Scottish" and rather more atmospheric. French music at that time, Berlioz apart, was somewhat in the doldrums, whereas the Scandinavian score, with its strong German influences, had quite a lot to commend it.

La Sylphide was a very clever choice of a Bournonville work for the Ballet Rambert repertory. In fact, apart from the fragment of *Konservatoriet,* this is probably the only Bournonville in the current Danish repertory that would have been practicable for the Rambert company. Naturally Elsa Marianne von Rosen has had to cut down the number of dancers for this Rambert revival (and one particularly misses the children in the first act) but this apart it seems to be astonishingly authentic and faithful, which is the more remarkable as Von Rosen herself, being a Swede, has never been a member of the Royal Danish Ballet. In some ways the Rambert production may be regarded as even more authentic than the current Danish, as Von Rosen and Fridericia received help from the old Danish ballerina Ellen Price de Plane, who gave them a few incidents — such as Effie's dance — which have been dropped from the official Danish production.

P.S. Ivor Guest tells me that I was wrong last month in my Ballet Perspective on *La Sylphide,* when I followed the opera historians in giving November 22, 1831, as the first performance of *Robert le Diable,* rather than the November 21 given by the ballet historians. He has personally checked the date and assures me that November 21 is correct.

DANCING

FOR Elsa Marianne von Rosen to have produced this ballet from scratch on a strange company in about three weeks was a remarkable achievement. But what was even more remarkable was her success in teaching the company the correct Bournonville style. The pure French school of Bournonville is so subtly but markedly different from the English style (compounded from the Italian and Russian schools) that it is obviously very difficult to inculcate into English dancers. It is the measure of her triumph that by the end of the season most of the company were dancing and acting almost like Bournonville veterans.

The ballet had two pairs of principals, the first Elsa Marianne von Rosen and Flemming Flindt, and the second, a home team — Lucette Aldous and Kenneth Bannerman.

Von Rosen, who has never been seen to better advantage in England, is a natural-born charmer. The real difference between *La Sylphide* and the wili *Giselle* is that while the first is all sunlight and pathos, the second is all moonlight and tragedy. It was the sunshine that Von Rosen so sweetly captured, the gay way her Sylphide with childlike innocence clapped her hands with joy, the beguiling looks she gave to James and the simple generosity of her love for him. Yet for all this she never gave the impression of really being a woman, there was a fey, elfin quality to all her movements, even an elusive air of foreboding in her gaiety. Her death scene, gently under-played, was genuinely moving. She seemed like a surprised child meeting pain for the first time. Her dancing had all of that soft rounded quality we associate with Bournonville, as well as the quicksilver delicacy, the fleeting simplicity which is so characteristic of his choreography.

It was a great pleasure to welcome back Flemming Flindt to England, and an even greater pleasure to note how much he had improved since he was last here with Festival Ballet. His acting was strong and forceful — at times perhaps even too forceful — and he has acquired an extremely confident stage presence. His dancing in the second act was exceptionally brilliant, with huge jumps, beautifully clear beats, splendid *double tours en l'air* in both directions, and a wonderfully sensitive use of musical phrasing. This was superlative male dancing.

Lucette Aldous made a very promising début as the Sylphide, and obviously has the makings of a fine interpretation. Her dancing showed many qualities, such as

FORTUNE TELLING WITCH (top left): Gillian Martlew, as Madge, reads the palms of the village girls during which she foretells that Effie will not marry James. Photo: John Blomfield

BRITISH SYLPHIDE (right): Lucette Aldous who danced the rôle during the Sadler's Wells season and who takes it over during the company's tours. Photo: Allegro Studios

a springy jump and excellent placing, but to my mind she missed something of the softness of Danish ballet. The characterisation was cleverly done, yet here again I felt that she was modelling herself somewhat on the lines of Giselle. This needs a more robust, even warmer approach, elusive in the way of a capricious butterfly, rather than the wraith-like ethereality proper to a Giselle. On the other hand, already Aldous can give hints of what her performance will be like in time — she has moments of faery mischief, when she picks up James's hat, for example, and here she is working very much along the right lines.

Kenneth Bannerman, who has the distinction of being the first Scotsman ever to dance James, had a manly bearing and danced musically. He has a curiously evasive stage personality, and could do with a more forthright manner, His dancing was more in the nature of a brave try than a complete success; it was perfectly adequate for the ballet, but not unexpectedly he lost in the comparison with Flindt. Who wouldn't — only Bruhn and Blair perhaps.

The rest of the performance was almost surprisingly good — one would not have thought it possible for the cast to have assimilated so much in so short a time. Gillian Martlew as Madge the Witch (called incorrectly on the programme Magda — I had no idea the Scots went in for Hungarian witches !) while not effacing memories of Gerda Karstens, was extremely effective. This was a fine, dominating performance, full of gnarled malevolence. Equally credible was John Chesworth's convincing Gurn. This rough, rather greedy, but, essentially likeable Gurn, proved far more plausible than the more obviously comic figure portrayed by Niels Bjorn Larsen for the Danes.

Shirley Dixon made a lovable Effie, and her petulance at James's strange behaviour during the wedding celebrations was capitally done. Another fine piece of dancing came from June Sandbrook as the chief Sylphide attendant. In this small rôle she gave a copy-book demonstration of the finer points of Bournonville. The two male solos in the first act were given rather diffidently by John O'Brien, and with impressive *ballon* by Kenneth Bannerman. When Bannerman danced James, his part was taken over by a promising newcomer, Alan Cunliffe.

It is one thing to start dancing Bournonville ballet, but quite another thing, as Festival Ballet's *Napoli* shows, to keep dancing a Bournonville ballet without the finer shades of expression becoming obscured. I hope — and, remembering their *Giselle*, believe—that Ballet Rambert will guard this treasure with the reverence it deserves. I am all in favour of the Bournonville ballets having a wider distribution, and would suggest that after this success the Rambert investigate whether there are any other Bournonville works that might be suitable for their repertory. Meanwhile, why doesn't the Royal Ballet mount the complete *Napoli?*

Clive Barnes.

DECOR

HOWEVER hard designers may try, there is really nothing new that can be done to Romantic classics, particularly when they are as carefully preserved for well over a century as had been Bournonville's version of *La Sylphide*. The music is gentle, sweet and rounded even in its more sinister moments and to try and do "clever" things with the designing inevitably leads to disaster as we once found when that exciting painter, Carzou, superimposed his own very personal spiky and vertical approach on the Paris Opéra *Giselle*. It just simply didn't work out. It therefore means that the designer has to sink his own style and personality into the evocation of another century and try his utmost to reconstruct an environment for the ballet as near as possible to what we imagine it was when it was first created. This is what Robin and Christopher Ironside have done for Ballet Rambert and it was obviously the right way of going about it.

I think that interiors in ballet are very difficult to achieve successfully, specially low rooms for large stages. More difficult, oddly enough, than large rooms for small stages because ingenuity can suggest that there are vast spaces somewhere off stage whereas the amount of masking-in that has to take place on large stages usually looks stupid and also destroys the sight-lines for those seated in the upper reaches of the theatre. In this respect the Ironsides have been successful with the opening act of *La Sylphide* where Osbert Lancaster failed dismally in his last act for *La Fille Mal Gardée*. They have seen the main room in James's mother's house as an oak-panelled and beamed room of a fairly primitive kind.

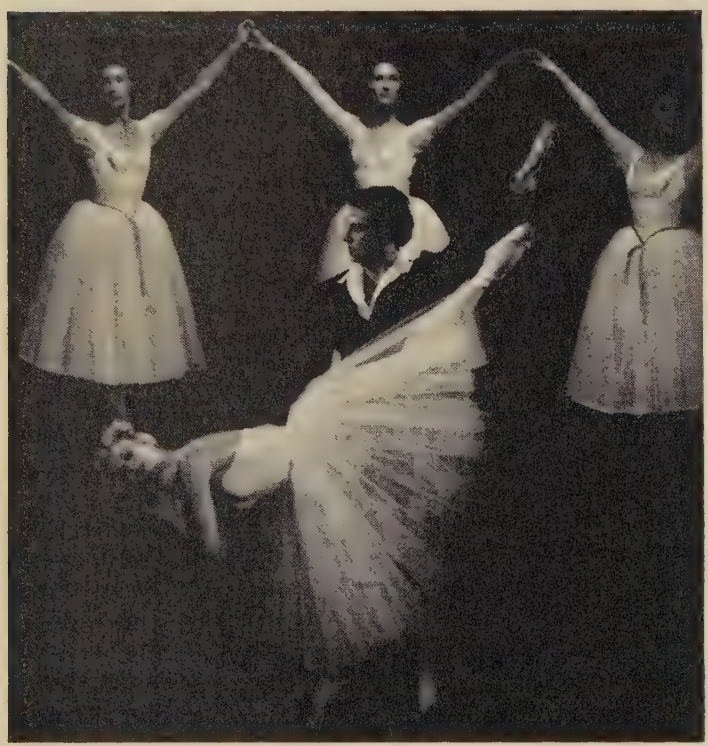
SECOND ACT SETTING: The original design by Robin and Christopher Ironside for the forest scene in the second act. Photo: Allegro Studios.

Different in shape to both the Royal Danish, Les Ballets des Champs Elysées and the de Cuevas productions in that the staircase and landing leading to the upper floor is on the prompt side of the stage instead of at the back. There is nothing wrong with this apart from the fact that it tends to clutter one side of the stage a bit more and is hardly visible to those seated on the extreme right-hand side of the theatre.

The back wall is mainly taken up by a huge fireplace which has the advantage of everyone being able to see the Sylphide fly up the chimney though I am frankly a bit dubious about the vital importance of this specially when it cramps a far more important feature, namely the window through which the Sylphide appears at a later point in this act and which can be, hide the lift.

The lighting, in this act, was too bright and it would have been better if it had been concentrated on the stage and dancing area and kept off the scenery. In this way there would have been more shadows and it would also have given an illusion of greater depth.

A great deal of trouble has been gone to in getting accuracy in the highland costumes. The kilts are authentic (in fact the programme informs us that they have been supplied by The Scotch House, an establishment I always feel should be called the "Scottish" House) possibly they are just a little too authentic as a few more concessions to Romanticism would have been better. However, they are far better than the costumes the Danes use, particularly in the size and position of



TWO CASTS IN ONE ACT: Left, Elsa Marianne von Rosen and Flemming Flindt with members of the corps. *Right, the British cast: Lucette Aldous and Kenneth Bannerman in the same act.* *Photo: Allegro Studios.*

when well done, one of the most lovely entrances in all Romantic ballet. In this production this entrance never achieved its full beauty owing to the fact that the window was far too high from the floor and far too small for her to come through erect. This I feel to be the one serious designing fault in this whole act. This, and the fact that on one of the walls a heart and some initials have been carved, something I hardly feel would be allowed to remain long on the walls of a staid farm-owning lady.

All the "effects" of the Copenhagen production were attempted—the Sylphide's disappearance up the chimney and also out of James's chair as well as her flying descent from the window. This latter was rather spoiled for me by the fact that it was possible to see a vertical gap containing the lift. It could have been better disguised, particularly if there is a table below the window as in the Royal Danish production because such an object has so many vertical lines that it is easy to

the sporran. The colours of the tartans are mainly green with a few touches of orange and yellow. In contrast to this, James wore a plum jacket and a plum and white kilt and plaid. It was altogether charming, masculine and by far the best costume I have seen for him in all the four productions. It was a pity, though, that all the dancers wore their own hair as it made the men look far too modern. The girls, mercifully, did not wear the kilt which always makes them look like ladies' dance competitions at Highland games or the Dagenham Girl Pipers. Instead they wore plain full-skirted dresses with tartan shawls or plaids. They were simple in line and absolutely right for they looked as though they belonged to their surroundings.

Madge had a sinister grey make-up, long wispy grey hair and a bundle of ragged garments; her black and dim yellow cloak made her look like an angry and dusty old wasp. Altogether this first act came off splendidly and so did the scene for the

witches which opens the second act. It was a misty undetermined place — somewhere rocky and remote where evil is brewed. The fact that there was smoke or mist painted on the semi-transparent front cloth gave the witches the effect of materialisation or flying as they came leaping on. As this scene dissolved into the next the effect was less happy.

So much, of course, depends on how the designer sees this domain of the Sylphides. The fact that James is enchanted by it makes me feel that it should be lush, leafy and ravishingly pretty with just a suggestion of distant mountains and a lake to bring a hint of the stark reality from which James is trying to escape. In Copenhagen they have a soft and charming old set for this act which is possibly enhanced by the most subtle lighting. It may have been the lighting at Sadler's Wells that made the Rambert second act less successful. On the other hand the fault may lie with the Ironsides who have treated their rocks and trees in a too hard and stylised manner and their large expanse of distance with its lake and range of pink mountains is rather muddy and obviously very light-absorbing. Much of this could be obviated by backing the backcloth and then lighting it from the back, thus giving a far greater distance to the sky and a more watery and luminous quality to the lake. I would imagine that they have tried to bring a feeling of heather to the scene but somehow it hasn't quite worked out. It is possible that all this will improve after somebody has been able to spend more time in lighting the whole act. As far as I could see from the performances at the Wells, the colours used for lighting the scene were quite wrong — possibly amber or something close to it, and this is the sort of colour most guaranteed to kill any delicacy or

THE SYLPHIDE'S DEATH: James, having inadvertently given her a poisoned scarf, is overcome with remorse as the Sylphide's wings drop off thus causing her death. *Photo: John Blomfield.*

subtlety in painting.

The costumes for all the Sylphides were traditional, based closely on what can be pieced together from prints of the original production and also very similar to what Benois designed for Fokine's homage to the spirit of Romanticism and Chopin in a ballet which has made the Sylphide most known to 20th-century audiences. Charming as these costumes are I feel that a little subtlety could be introduced by a faint suggestion of some other colour — possibly green or blue — in one of the underskirts, thus giving more life to what is otherwise a rather heavy expanse of white — anyway, tulle would be softer than that stiff and unyielding white net.

In this act are some more flying effects. The Sylphide flies on, which she no longer does in the Danish version, she also flies up a tree to collect a bird's nest. This latter was extremely clumsy and it was possible to see the mechanism — in fact, this long straight pole had worried me all through the act. As far as I can remember in other productions, the mechanism is disguised behind the tree and the Sylphide encircles the trunk with her arm to steady herself as she ascends and descends. When the dead body of the Sylphide floats away to the heavens in the end, she departs in a rather unnatural sitting position and I very much missed the beautiful effect of her appearing to recline on a twist of material guarded at each end by two little cupids — as it is in Denmark.

It is perhaps unfair to make comparisons between that production which has all the advantages of a permanent and State-subsidised theatre, whereas this is a small production which has to tour the world, playing in no theatre for more than a few performances. The fact remains that this is a really splendid effort that will undoubtedly prove to be one of the greatest attractions to Ballet Rambert's already very distinguished repertory.

Peter Williams.

THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL: Madge (Martlew) triumphs over the dead body of James (Flindt) while the Sylphides waft away the dead body of their sister Sylphide (Von Rosen). The final moment of the ballet. *Photo: John Blomfield.*

DESIGN FOR THE SETTING: the set by Ralph Adron, recently a student at the Slade School, for Norman Morrice's new ballet. Photo: Denis de Marney.

The Wise Monkeys

First given by Ballet Rambert in London at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on July 18, 1960
Choreography by Norman Morrice. Music by Shostakovitch. Designed by Ralph Adron.

Cast

A Young Girl ..... LUCETTE ALDOUS
Her Conscientious Monkeys ..... JUNE SANDBROOK, THELMA LITSTER, JENNIFER KELLY
A Young Man ..... JOHN O'BRIEN
His slightly dilatory Monkeys ..... JOHN CHESWORTH, KENNETH BANNERMAN, GORDON COSTER
A Lady of rather more than usual experience ..... GILLIAN MARTLEW
A Gentleman well acquainted with her ..... NORMAN MORRICE

MONKEYS FOR EACH SEX: The Young Man's "slightly dilatory" monkeys, played by Kenneth Bannerman, John Chesworth and Gordon Coster; and the Young Girl's "conscientious" Monkeys, played by Thelma Litster, Jennifer Kelly and June Sandbrook. Photo: Dominic.

STORY

"THE action of the ballet takes place by the seashore as the tide is coming in. At this point the sea can be very rough and bathing definitely dangerous. Part of the plot derives from Eastern legends of the Three Wise Monkey here representing human consciences. Those who no longer have such encumbrances, of course, no longer have their attendant monkeys, but even those still in benefit, so to speak, should beware of taking these complicated phenomena for granted."

CHOREOGRAPHY

LAST year, writing of Norman Morrice's *Hazaña,* I ended my review with the remark that: "I would personally like to see him try his hand at something apart from a serious dramatic ballet — a plotless work or a comedy perhaps. It might easily flop, but the experience could in every way, be valuable." This year, Morrice *did* try a comedy ballet, it did flop, and it only remains to be seen what value he derives from the experiment.

However, although *The Wise Monkeys* is, in my opinion, a failure, it is undeniably a good failure, bearing the imprint of its creator's personality no less than did his two earlier successes. It may be that with *The Wise Monkeys* Morrice bit off more than he could digest, if not more than he could chew, but the first thing to appreciate is perhaps the difficulty of the task he had set himself.

To start with he was trying to make a comedy ballet, which is a far harder thing than it sounds at first thought. Most of the ballets that make us laugh are, strictly speaking, farces rather than comedies. Farce is choreographically a moderately easy target, as the actual conventions of ballet — like almost any set of conventions — lend themselves to a farcical treatment. The *pas de quatre* for the cygnets in *Swan Lake,* for example, is perilously near the ridiculous, needing only one of them to be out of step for the result to be ludicrous, as Petit realised when he used this device in *Ballabile.* But comedy implies something more. Like tragedy there is in comedy some kind of inherent comment on human beings. Thus *The Good-Humoured Ladies* is comedy, whereas Massine's later *Mam'zelle Angot* is only farce. To produce a ballet comedy the choreographer has to hold a mirror up to nature, and mirror-holding is a pretty serious business.

In *The Wise Monkeys* presumably Morrice was attempting to make a ballet about love and innocence. The wise monkeys themselves were intended to symbolise human consciences, with two contrasted pairs of lovers — the "lovers in innocence" possessing these simian entanglements, and the "lovers in experience" having lost them on the way. In theory it sounds all right, but as anyone will tell you if theory were practice we critics would be a lot finer fellows than we are at present. The basic problem is how do you show that your monkeys symbolise human conscience? And the basic answer is that you can't. As literary symbolism they evoke no response (these three monkeys are not, of course, the brass ones, but those that could "see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil", a condition perhaps suggestive of innocence but certainly not of conscience) and as dance symbolism Morrice completely fails to give them life. The part they play in the ballet is neither logically consistent,

nor useful, nor even decorative. They are not only a dead loss, they are a dead weight.

Having disposed of these unwise monkeys, one is left with a quartet of lovers roughly deployed in much the same eternal quadrilateral as Ashton once used far more wittily in *Les Masques.* The stock types of young lovers and interesting libertines are obvious, and the actual situation is as predictable as a roundabout. Simplicity in itself is no crime, but when that simplicity is wrapped up with such complicated trappings as are found here the result smacks something of pretentiousness.

So far as the whole theme is concerned, I got the impression that Morrice did not really know what he was trying to do, and was not given enough guidance as to what was or was not practicable. The actual choreography seemed to be a curious ragbag of the very good and the very bad, with a great deal of mediocrity thrown in for ill measure. In his two earlier ballets Morrice had worked with already existing scores and appeared to make a virtue of the necessity. Yet here with the Shostakovitch he appears to have made a bad choice, and gets very little inspiration or even help from the music.

Also, while the conception of the ballet is on the plane of high comedy, some of the action is obvious to a degree. The sham, slow-motion boxing match between the two young men, and the episode of the male monkeys getting drunk, are both distressingly banal. Yet for all their banality even here the quality of Morrice's imagination still peeps through; when the monkeys get drunk, two of them embark on a mad kind of fox-trot, while the third pretends to play a violin, or again after the rather dull boxing match, the victor has first one hand and then the other raised above his head in triumph by the monkeys, and completes the gesture by clasping his hands together in a prize-fighter's salute.

These incidents are typical of Morrice's special quality of observation. At the beginning of the second movement, when the sophisticated couple are flirting with the naïve youngsters, Morrice has contrived a whole passage of dance fused with mime that has a telling subtlety. Here he is using the Tudor dance language of, say, *Jardin aux Lilas,* with the utmost freedom, and one has only to see this section of *The Wise Monkeys,* with its cross-currents of emotion, to realise that Morrice has a very great talent indeed.

His characterisation in this latest work is, on the whole, less sure than in his two dramatic ballets. His failure with the monkeys has already been noted, and elsewhere he has not quite brought off the portraiture in depth which has been such a feature of his earlier work. But even so the dance characterisation is still a good deal more than adequate. The two young lovers are displayed with beguiling simplicity, and the blasé couple are quite neatly identified. Although the *femme fatale,* for example, is given pretty conventional siren movements, she is still given a few moments of individuality.

For *The Wise Monkeys* Morrice has had to use — or perhaps has chosen to use — far more pure dance choreography than in his earlier works. For a choreographer who is not himself fundamentally a classical dancer (and Cranko and Jack Carter are other cases in point) the creation of academic dances is always something of a test if not an ordeal. Morrice has accepted this task in his inventions for the young lovers and, I think, acquitted himself surprisingly well. It would have been easy to over-elaborate and be too clever, but he has not succumbed to this temptation and has worked out his dances with a very commendable absence of affectation. On the other hand, his dances lack much in the way of choreographic wit or humour, and his dangerously few laughs are all aroused from either situation or comic gesture.

AN EXPERIENCED LADY AT WORK: The Lady "of rather more than usual experience", played by Gillian Martlew, makes a pass at the Young Man, played by John O'Brien, to the chagrin of the monkeys. *Photo: Dominic.*

After the great enthusiasm generated by *Two Brothers* and *Hazaña,* obviously *The Wise Monkeys* has come as something of an anti-climax, and most of its reviews have reflected that sense of disappointment which so many of the choreographer's admirers naturally felt. Although I was as disappointed as anyone by the work as a whole, I do feel that the high quality of some of its details must be stressed. It is also a pity that so many people, both in writing and in conversation, have implied that this one ballet indicates that despite Morrice's undisputed talents for dance drama, "comedy is not for him" or that "he lacks the ability to create pure dancing". The latter I think is definitely untrue, while the former is, as they say in those sensible Scottish courts, not proven. It would be unfortunate if after the cool reception accorded to this ballet, Morrice were to turn his back on comedy for evermore.

DANCING

PRESUMABLY one of the main intentions of the ballet was to provide a vehicle for Lucette Aldous, and in this limited respect at least it must be accounted a success. Morrice has understood her qualities particularly well, and she in turn made the most of the very considerable choreographic opportunities she has been given. Her dancing in this was almost flawless. There is a very individual flavour to her style, which arises partly perhaps from its unusual mixture of sharp clarity (copybook and precise) with exuberant lyricism. In a curious way she makes dancing come close to singing, and I like her gift of so often appearing to do the unexpected. Her acting proved tender and poignant, and she showed an enviable ability to act with her whole body.

John O'Brien as her opposite number gave his best performance to date. He is a clean dancer with a far more than adequate classical technique, and a pleasant sense of humour. However, he needed more elevation, and a more whole-hearted approach generally to his dancing. He has improved a lot from last season, yet was still looking a shade inhibited in his movement, as if he lacked the confidence to let himself dance full out.

Gillian Martlew we take for granted, and rightly, if unjustly, so. She is one of those wonderful Rambert artists — somehow, perhaps by witchcraft, there seems to be one in every generation—who not only can do anything, but can do anything most remarkably well. The one criticism that could be levelled against her *dame fatale* was a certain heavy emphasis which underlined the rôle's inherent obviousness.

The final member of the quartet was Morrice himself, and just as I feel that the ballet may have lost by his having to appear in it, I also suspect that his own performance lost through his choreographic responsibilities. Previously he has always created admirably for himself, yet with *The Wise Monkeys* it may well be that he needed to stand outside the work, and eventually compromised by not giving

Continued on page 33.

CHOREOGRAPHIC ARMY TRAINING: John Gilpin, as the young Bonaparte, attempts to discipline the Nicois soldiers. A moment in the opening scene of Lifar's ballet. *Photo: Houston Rogers*

Bonaparte à Nice (1796)

First given in London by London's Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall, July 19, 1960. Ballet in three scenes by Maurice Bessy. Choreography by Serge Lifar, Music by M. Thiriet. Designed by André Levasseur.

Cast

Bonaparte ..... JOHN GILPIN
The Count Laurenti ..... ANTON DOLIN
Angella (his daughter) ..... MARILYN BURR
The Moor (a Valet) ..... VASSILIE TRUNOFF
The Officers ..... MICHAEL HOGAN, JEAN-PIERRE ALBAN, JELKO YURESHA
The Gendarmes ..... PETER WHITE, KENNETH SUDELL
Corps de Ballet of Soldiers, Cavaliers and Orange-Tree Maidens

STORY

"IN March, 1796, the young General Bonaparte arrives in Nice to discover an army of undisciplined soldiers. He immediately proceeds to reorganise this rabble into an efficient fighting force.

"Two Gendarmes place Bonaparte under house arrest in the residence of Count Laurenti. In the Orangery Bonaparte pays court to Angella, the Count's daughter, but is interrupted by her father. Left alone he meditates and works out his tactical problems, amused by his servant, the Moor.

"Bonaparte reviews his troops and they march off with the cavalry to battle."

CHOREOGRAPHY

BONAPARTE A NICE (1796) leaves me almost at a loss for words, so to give myself a chance to get my breath back let me start off by telling you a story. A few days after the first performance of this epic (in London that is, other engagements had prevented me from flying to Nice for the world première) I was talking it over with some friendly colleagues. And to my amazement discovered that they thought it was *meant* to be funny. This so upset my conceptions of what was right and wrong in this world, that at the earliest opportunity I spoke to my Editor and asked him whether *he* thought it was *meant* to be funny. "Funny," he replied, "oh yes, I think it's *meant* to be funny. Not that it is, of course." You could have knocked me down with a feather. For days afterwards I went around pondering, saying to myself "It's not *meant* to be funny" or sometimes "It's not meant to be *funny*" and finally, with a husky note of desperation breaking into my voice, "It's *not* meant to be funny!" Then doubts assailed me. You might call a ballet *Bonaparte à Nice* that was anything, but would you honestly call a ballet *Bonaparte à Nice (1796)* that was meant to be anything else but funny? Then again, presuming that you are not a crass idiot, would you let Napoleon ride a hobby horse and have him review a troop of *corps de ballet* ladies also riding hobby horses, or for that matter have your young Bonaparte start messing around with another selection of young ladies dressed up as orange trees, if your intentions were not funny? Then again even if it is meant to be funny is it meant to be funny peculiar or funny ha-ha? I had got myself a problem.

Let me tell you another story. At the first night there was a certain amount of understandable booing, mixed in with the rather less understandable applause. Two people were coming out of the auditorium, and one said to the other: "Was that booing political, do you think?" And I swear to the truth of this story.

Well, as I was saying, I find myself at a loss for words about *Bonaparte à Nice (1796)*, in fact if it were not for fear of incurring my Editor's disapproval, I would end here and tell you I was going to write about the ballet next week. Not only would I be following a very sound precedent, but a remark like that in a monthly could save me a whole lot of trouble. But I digress, and the Editor is waiting for his review.

A funny thing happened to me as I was going into the Festival Hall that night. And this was just as well, because nothing funny happened to me once I got there, and as for *Bonaparte à Nice (1796)* I found that simply tragic. It opens — and I use the word in its loosest sense — with a tableau featuring, I think, the young Napoleon surveying some somewhat assorted troops. The tableau fades and the troops amuse themselves by playing leap-frog. Napoleon re-enters riding a white hobby horse and careers round the stage as if he didn't mind a bit. The troops are rather impressed by this. They are even more impressed when he detaches himself from the hobby horse, and hurls himself into a classical variation, which disciplines them up no end. There is nothing like seeing his general doing a *double tours en l'air* to give a man pride in his regiment. Without any trouble at all the soldiers stop playing leap-frog and stand around gaping with amazement. As well they might. At this point, if nightmare memory serves, some girls come on also riding or wearing hobby horses. If nightmare memory doesn't serve the girls have come on before Napoleon, but I assure you that neither way does it affect the action of the ballet.

The plot thickens. Two Gendarmes arrest Napoleon for a nameless crime, presumably he had parked his hobby horse and failed to put a franc in the meter. They cart him off to an orange grove, where there are all

these orange maidents. Napoleon refuses to bark up the wrong tree, and waits for some girl to come into the grove. With her he dances a romantic *pas de deux,* which is the most inoffensive and interesting part of the ballet. Either before or alternatively after this *pas de deux* — and I assure you that neither way does it affect the action of the ballet — Napoleon's valet, who happens to be a Moor, does some handstands by way of a diversion (I note from the programme, which incidentally suggests that this dance is after the *pas de deux,* that at this point Napoleon "meditates and works out his tactical problems".)

Chief among his tactical problems has been the emergence of Anton Dolin, as the girl's father, who is obviously very upset about something. The Gendarmes now let Napoleon free (I, of course, knew his arrest was a mistake right from the beginning) and he goes back to the square from whence he was taken and starts reviewing the troops. This passage struck me as just very faintly reminiscent of a somewhat similar passage in the earlier ballet *London Morning,* and I personally thought it was a mistake for the new ballet to risk comparison with this already established work. After some more military manoeuvres, the young Bonaparte says goodbye to the girl he picked up in the orange grove, while her father expresses what I took to be pleasure at his going. He then goes — and conquers Europe off stage. The ballet closes, and I use the word in its loosest sense.

It would be unfair to say that Lifar has not characterised Napoleon in his choreography. The careful observer will note that the young Bonaparte quite frequently rests one hand in the small of his back, and tucks the other in his tunic. If this is not choreographic characterisation, what may I ask is it? The orange tree maidens are less clearly delineated, although, in all fairness, I am not at all certain that I would recognise an orange tree maiden even if I saw one.

At a casual glance it might look as though a great deal of Lifar's choreography came straight out of the ballet class. Yet I would ask any sceptic, whether he ever saw dancers in a ballet class wearing hobby horses. There is more originality here than appears at first sight.

There is one minor criticism that I would raise against this definitely remarkable ballet. John Gilpin, who played Napoleon, has an exceptionally fine classical technique, the one chink in his technical armoury being a lack of facility in *double tours en l'air.* It was consequently perhaps a little unwise of Lifar to concentrate so much on this step.

DANCING

ALL joking apart, Festival Ballet has some extremely able dancers, and it is a terrible pity to see all their talent going to waste on this kind of thing. John Gilpin, Marilyn Burr, Anton Dolin and Vassilie Trunoff do their best with such material as they are given, but all to no avail.

I felt particularly sorry for John Gilpin, who is technically one of the finest male dancers in the world, has that rare thing a personal dance style, and in the past has given hints in what meagre opportunities he has been given which indicate that given the right rôle he is perfectly capable of genuine dramatic expression. After ten years with London's Festival Ballet he has yet to create any rôle as memorable as the tiny part of the Rabbit Catcher which he performed in his youth with the Ballet Rambert. Festival Ballet have in Gilpin a great star, but he has yet to be given the opportunities to show whether he could develop into a great dancer.

There was a second cast in this ballet, led by the admirable Louis Godfrey, but I fear my sense of duty has not yet given me the courage to see the ballet for a second time.

The management of this company is struggling against great odds. They have no subsidy and cannot be blamed for courting the popularity they obviously need for survival. Yet I still believe that the public will respond to a good ballet far more readily than to a work like *Bonaparte à Nice.* By the time these words appear, Festival Ballet will have presented Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque* — and *if* it is danced well, as I think it might be, the company's management may see what I mean.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

WHETHER the dancing or the music more quickly exhausted my patience in this deplorably jejune epic I am not quite sure. Either way it was a close call between them. On occasions like this I begin to wonder why human beings are fitted with eyelids but denied earflaps, to manipulate at will like the vision and sound controls on the "telly". It was possible to shut out the visual inanities of *Bonaparte à Nice (1796)* simply by closing one's eyes, but nothing short of leaving the hall could escape the banalities of musical sounds attributed to one M. Thiriet. Could this be the "Maurice" Thiriet responsible for *L'Oeuf à la Coque* and *Deuil en 24 Heures*?

Whoever this M. Thiriet may be, and whether the initial hides a forename or is merely a courtesy abbreviation to disguise an equivalent ignorance on the part of Festival Ballet, I haven't the slightest idea. Neither am I in any great hurry to find out. A composer who scatters diminished sevenths and other treacle-toasted musical clichés as liberally as M. Thiriet merits as much anonymity as he can preserve. After all, he has now earned himself the distinction (and presumably a comforting fee) of providing the shoddiest new score I have heard in ballet since N. Coward.

From the opening fanfare through to the *Marseillaise,* hauled in by the scruff of its neck for a peroration (cf. the apotheosis of *London Pride* in *London Morning),* there was not a note that a first-year student would not have been ashamed to own. The drivelling succession of fox-trots and hobby-horse jigs (perhaps it should be *gigues* in this context), of a winsome gavotte for the Orange Tree Maidens, a slow waltz for the *pas de deux* and a cakewalk for the character identified in excruciatingly superfluous detail as "The Moor (a Valet)" exploited a triviality of invention and harmony that would have wilted the fronds in a palm court.

Admittedly, anything much stronger would have exposed the level of choreography even more conspicuously. To the extent that step and rhythm more or less matched I suppose the music could be called "serviceable", in the way that a plastic raincoat serves to keep out the wet, or Geoffrey Corbett's conducting served to beat time. None of them, however, can exactly be described as an enhancement of the purpose in any artistic sense, and if M. Thiriet is representative of the London Philharmonic Orchestra's summer diet, I am not surprised that it takes most of the winter to recover.

What to me is most serious about this sorry affair, however, is not that M. Thiriet should supply his customers with

Continued on page 34.

LOVE AMONGST THE ORANGES: Bonaparte (Gilpin) and Angella (Marilyn Burr) meet and make love in the garden of Count Laurenti's house where there are orange groves as well as Orange-Tree Maidens, one of whom is seen on the right.

Photo: Houston Rogers.

WHAT WE THOUGHT OF

The Stars of the Bolshoi

Two opinions of the group of sixteen dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow who appeared at the Royal Albert Hall for a three-week season on June 27.

From PETER WILLIAMS

WHEN people read that Stars of the Bolshoi Ballet are to appear in a "Highlights" programme and that the place in which they are to appear is the Royal Albert Hall, then it seems to me that only the most dim-witted will be ignorant as to the form of entertainment they will see. Judging by some reactions it would appear that there are dimmer wits about than any of us imagined even at the lowest ebb of our assessment of human understanding. Frankly, we were given more or less what we had been promised and, apart from the fact that the present group was smaller in number and not in a proper theatre, just what we had been led to expect from the now famous season of the fuller Bolshoi Ballet company when they were in Croydon. I disliked this kind of dance presentation as much then as I do now, yet there are compensations which force me to admit, most reluctantly, that such manifestations have a decided place in the ballet year.

Such programmes as the sixteen dancers from the Bolshoi gave at the Albert Hall from June 27 to July 17 are obviously not for those who expect to see ballets—"Don't think much of their scenery," said a woman behind me surveying the bare island stage which appeared to be almost floating in the vast wastes of the gasometer-like building. "Fancy, no *corps de ballet!*" said another as she tucked into a repulsively noisy box of chocolates. "Not much like Covent Garden is it? said a dinner-jacketed gentleman who had brought along a party of five all dressed in a manner which suggested that they had merely dropped in on their way to the Four Hundred. Certainly it was not for any of them, any more than it was for earnest students of choreography or stage design.

The people who will get the most value out of these performances are those who just like to see dancers dancing regardless of what they are dancing or how they are dressed. Of course, some of us got very quaint views of this dancing in-the-almost-round when we found ourselves placed so much on the side that it all looked as though we were seeing it from the wings — even *that* was not uninteresting. At this point I would like to suggest to the Royal Albert Hall that for dance spectacles on their new stage they should, in future, sell their side seats very, very cheap. In this way they might possibly simmer down those rather understandably infuriated persons who paid over a quid for such a cock-eyed view of it all.

At one performance I found myself so much on one side that the most exhilarating spectacle of the whole evening was provided by watching the reactions of the public similarly placed on the opposite side of the hall — fun in a sort of peep-keyhole way but not really the way I had hoped to pass some very valuable hours of the evening.

The sixteen dancers who took part in these proceedings were mainly old friends and in spite of the hardly complimentary surroundings it was a pleasure to see them again. They gave nearly every famous classical Russian *pas de deux* known to the Western world, some excerpts from more recent works not seen in Britain, some character dances and a few out-and-out concert pieces — in fact, a typical *Salade Russe à la Mode*. What to me was curious, was that, apart from Petipa's Bluebird *pas de deux*, all the Russian classical *pas de deux* had choreography not by their original creators. I would have thought that their natural pride in their past and tradition would have made it imperative that the works of both Petipa and Ivanov be kept as lovingly intact as, say, the Danes have preserved their Bournonville — but no, because both Gorsky and Vainonen have played choreographic havoc in most of their re-arrangements of these classics. In the end they all seem to look more or less the same and very little different to the more recent creations and a greyness suffuses all the choreography, a greyness that is only dissipated by some very splendid dancing.

What to me is the most exciting feature of all these Bolshoi dancers is the freedom of the whole body. They are not tied down by what is generally considered to be correct classical placement. After all, we know enough about their great school to realise that the foundation is there all right but they seem to follow in the steps of Pavlova who said that "after you have perfected a classical technique, you then forget all about it". The fact is that their entire bodies — from the tips of their fingers to the extremities of their toes — respond to music with no inhibitions. There is a marvellous flow of movement in everything they do. Though I could not be more emphatic about the extreme necessity of a severely strict classical foundation in every school of dance even, as Martha Graham would endorse, in the school of Modern Dance, I do wish that some of our British dancers would, after they have reached the perfection class stage, follow the example of the Russians and loosen up, relax and let their bodies respond the whole way in the direction that the music tells them. After seeing these concerts, I began to find our dancers looking like local council allotments rather than a beautiful piece of landscape gardening.

Classics first and in the two programmes we fairly well ran the gamut. Outstanding were Nina Timofeyeva and Boris Khokhlov in the *Don Quixote pas de deux* and by this I mean the actual *pas de deux* rather than the variations and coda which go to make it "grand". This was a glorious piece of dancing — smooth, free and brilliant. Gorsky has almost ornamented the original Petipa choreography and the addition of some high lifts is here an improvement particularly when it is given as a concert piece. Where there is no improvement at all is in the two variations, particularly hers. I have never cared for the fluttering fans used by most ballerinas in this dance, on the other hand without a fan it all becomes a bit pointless and I particularly dislike the way these dancers execute a series of *chainé* turns on half-point — aesthetically it is most untidy to see the foot coming out at an angle to the leg in such movements. Khokhlov danced his variation superbly but I particularly missed the elegance and noble bearing of some of our Western dancers — the sort of quality that Skibine had when he was at his height. I also found that by breaking the coda up into a series of *soli* with a decided pause for applause between each the whole thing became more of a circus than ever.

These same two dancers brought a marvellous liquid poetry to the *adage* from *Swan Lake*, Act 2. If Gorsky's choreography is no improvement on Ivanov's original, the execution made it something that I would like to see some of our best Western dancers imitate. There was a ripple and flow in Timofeyeva's whole body with every movement dovetailing so precisely into the next that it became like a great broad river flowing relentlessly to the sea — something I have seen from no Western ballerina. All the time the body forms a complete composition, either with itself or with that of the cavalier — even the tremendously high Russian *attitude* gets its natural extension from the arms so that if you drew an imaginary oval round the whole body the extremities would touch the curve at every point without trespassing beyond it. This same quality I saw in Rimma Karelskaya when she danced the Black Swan *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*, Act. 3.

Far more important than attempting super high lifts, it is this study of body composition that seems to be the most important feature of Soviet dancing for us to learn. It is all very well to be "correctly placed", an undeniable feature of what we rather incorrectly call the "English school", but all this goes for next to nothing in the theatre unless the correct placement of arms, legs, hands and so on are perfectly co-ordinated with each other so that an artist can draw a perfect flowing line round and through the body.

Less satisfactory was the "Bluebird" *pas de deux* from the *Sleeping Beauty* with Nina Fyedorova charmingly playing the rôle as Princess Florisse rather than as the usual lady bluebird, and Gleb Evdokimov sadly below the form which gave such immense promise when the company was here some years ago, though he almost made amends with his variations in the *Giselle pas de deux* in another programme.

Nor did I much care for Messerer's version of the *Adage* from *The Sleeping Beauty* which was pedestrian without "fish dives" and without excitement and hardly a showcase for Fyedorova and Zhdanov who danced it. The particular poetry of Fokine also seemed to escape Timofeyeva and Zhdanov in their waltz from *Les Sylphides* but this was more understandable as they never had the benefit of working with Fokine himself and there only remain two ballerinas in the West who give anything of the original poetry to this *pas de deux*.

I suppose that Vainonen's *Flames of Paris* is now considered to be a classic in Russia as it was created twenty-seven years ago. The "Classical Duet", as the programme called it, from the last act is a spirited dance piece and was given with all of this by Smirnova and Farmanyants, the latter being in splendid form and appearing to have regained the

BOLSHOI STARS: Left, Lydia Ushakova and Alexander Begak in a pas de deux *from Moiseyev's ballet,* Spartacus. *Right, Boris Khokhlov and Nina Timofeyeva in the Adagio from* Swan Lake, *Act 2. This picture shows what Peter Williams means when he says that it is possible to draw an oval round the ballerina's body so that the extremities touch the circumference without trespassing over it.* *Photos: Dominic*

strength that was lacking from his Covent Garden performances.

After the classics the interest was mainly concentrated on the excerpts from ballets never seen in England — Radunsky's *The Little Humpbacked Horse,* Moiseyev's *Spartacus,* Jakobson's *Shurale.* Here, I'm afraid, we were in for a bitter disappointment, because all the choreography was monotonously the same, without excitement and without interest. They all had the air of fusty and forgotten mausoleums rather than the interest and stimulation that can always be derived from museums.

Of course, it's not fair to judge the state of a country's choreography by snippets from works or from deliberate concert pieces but judging by what we have been shown, Russia's choreography is still in a pre-Diaghlilev state. This also applies to the costumes and I find it odd that a country which has given so much to the world in modern design for the straight theatre should have missed out so completely on its ballet. In number after number the girls appeared in wispy nightdresses and the boys in either a semi-draped nude torso or else in an almost "Elizabethan" costume of tunic and short puffy trunks with their not very elegant tights. These may be small and unimportant points compared with the splendour of the dancing, yet how much better this mediocre choreography would seem were it presented with elegance.

The pure concert pieces have to be considered in rather a different light as they were conceived not as a part of a whole but as something complete in themselves and for a very different form of presentation. I have always liked Messerer's *Melody* to Gluck music, ever since England first saw it one Saturday morning at the Stoll theatre given by Bolshoi students. It is a poetic piece of dance composition with its high lifts and promenades and although Tikhomirnova and Alexander Begak were less good in it than previous performers seen in this country it still has a lovely drifting quality which reflects Gluck's "Dance of the Blessed Spirits". Nor was Messerer's other admirable concert piece, *Spring Water,* to Rachmaninoff music, so good when danced by Fyedorova and Piotr Khomutov. Yet these, together with the famous Moshkovsky *Waltz,* also less well danced by Tikhomirnova and Begak, are the aristocrats of concert pieces. They aim at nothing higher than they achieve which is to provide "show-off" pieces for two people.

Getting lower in the scale was Gorsky's *The Ocean and the Pearls,* in which a blue-wigged and semi-bare torsced Farmanyants danced with two "Pearls" (Smirnova and Fyedorova) looking as though they had stepped out of an early edition of the Follies. Even so, much of the banality was obscured by the leaps and turns of "Ocean" Farmanyants who seemed quite unperturbed by either his costume or his rôle. Right at the bottom of the scale came *Masquerade Waltz* (to Khatchaturian music and mercifully un-named choreography) with Tikhomirnova fanning herself relentlessly and a Liszt-bewigged Khomutov eventually lifting her in the air still unabashedly con-

tinuing with her exercise. Hardly any better was Gorsky's *Reverie,* in which Lydia Ushakova and Khomutov indulged in an exercise *a l'école de Schéhérazade* or *The Hunter and the Bird,* in which Tikhomirnova and Begak showed some *l'école de l'Oiseau de Feu.*

There were a number of solo pieces of which Farmanyants' Gopak from *Taras Bulba,* a magnificent piece of character dancing which only Russians can do, and Timofeyeva's *Gavotte* were easily the best. In the latter, which owes nothing to the gavotte other than its Lully music, Timofeyeva gave one of the most perfectly controlled pieces of dancing that I have possibly ever seen. This combined with her elegant costume made it, for me at any rate, the highlight of both these programmes.

On a level only a fraction lower than these two came Susanna Zvyagina's two *soli* — one an Azerbaidjanian dance called *The Pheasant* and the other a Carnival Dance from Vainonen's *Mirandolina.* Both given with the wonderful quality and those remarkably subtle back-bends which made her so outstanding with the company when it was at Covent Garden. She is the kind of artist who seems able to bring authority and dignity to any occasion. A girl with red hair and Garbo-like beauty also scored a hit, and a deserved one, with her Gipsy Dance from *Don Quixote.*

Both programmes included the Polonaise and Cracovienne from *Ivan Susanin* and even though given by only six dancers instead of the large group which we saw at Croydon, it was still possible to see the wonderful style and sense of rightness which appears to escape most of our dancers when appearing in these national dances. On the other hand, there was little sense of style in the pocket version of Lavrovsky's *Walpurgis Night* orgy which ended the first programme. Whereas in Croydon the sheer brashness of this piece made it almost possible in an amusing sort of way like the worst extravagances of *art nouveau* in a museum — in the Albert Hall it was just ludicrous.

In many ways this concert season was a mistake because for those with memories of the company when it was at Covent Garden it came as a sad let-down. On the other hand, if this is the only way that we are going to be able to see Bolshoi dancers before the second visiting, probably sometime in the next century, then let them come like this as often as they can — even one swallow is better than no summer at all. But next time please send us more stars, a bigger group and let it all be presented properly in a proper theatre.

From CLIVE BARNES

1st programme

DO you remember Croydon, or did you (and this is sheer one-upmanship) only see the Bolshoi film? In either event you would have known something of what to expect at the Albert Hall, and, like mine, your first reaction would probably have been disappointment. Those three Russian nights at Croydon came at the end of the Covent Garden season when we had all adapted ourselves to the Russian way of ballet life. They took place in a real theatre and they were given by a very large troupe, led by the prima ballerinas, Ulanova and Struchkova. The present small group could hardly hope to compete, yet, particularly at first, the unfair comparison was bound to be made. But just in case there *was* anyone in the Albert Hall who had failed to get the message, the management thoughtfully underlined it from the outset by letting a mere six of the dancers open the proceedings with a sadly truncated version of Zakharov's *Polonaise and Cracovienne* from Glinka's *Ivan Susanin.* What previously had been one of the grandest choreographic spectacles London had seen in years, was here inevitably reduced to absurdly small dimensions. It was danced by Susanna Zvyagina, Lydia Ushakova, Tamara Varlamova, Konstantine Rikhter, Piotr Khomutov, and Vladimir Levashev, and on the first night made comparatively little impact, with the luckless young Khomutov making a very inadequate substitute for the masterly Alexander Radunsky. Subsequent performances were greatly improved, with Zvyagina and Rikhter in particular giving stylish performances.

I was also disappointed with Nina Timofeyeva and Boris Khokhlov in the Adagio from the second act of *Swan Lake.* Timofeyeva seemed smoothly mechanical, and danced with an exaggerated sense of *plastique,* yet insufficient emotion. (Here again, later performances were preferable, although I did not feel on the strength of this unsatisfactory excerpt that Timofeyeva's Odette has progressed a great deal since we last saw it in 1956.)

Proceedings were not much enhanced by the extract from Radunsky's new ballet *The Little Humpbacked Horse.* This latest reworking of a well-known Russian classic ballet, with a new but pitifully old-fashioned score by Shchedrin, made a disappointing vehicle for the reintroduction of Rimma Karelskaya and Margarita Smirnova to London audiences. To judge a ballet by an excerpt is grossly unfair — I remember at an R.A.D. gala how two *pas de deux* from Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Ondine* appeared comparatively ineffective. Even so Radunsky's vaudeville conception of the horse, with baby hooves pawing the air, looked weak, and the whole choreography seemed to have more than its fair share of clichés. Smirnova made a charming impression, and Leonid Zhdanov (brother of the more famous Yuri) acted attractively, but Karelskaya looked ill at ease.

We have seen Gluck's *Melody* danced by a number of fine ballerinas, and it seemed a pity for it to be danced by the enthusiastic but inexpressive Irina Tikhomirnova — wife of the choreographer Asaf Messerer. Tikhomirnova, one of the senior prima-ballerinas of the Bolshoi Ballet, who appeared in England two years ago on a concert tour, is not, in my opinion, the equal of her peers.

The programme brightened up considerably with an excellent *Moldavian Folk Dance,* imaginatively choreographed by Metchenko, and marvellously danced by the same group who had appeared in *Ivan Susanin,* with the admirable Levashev being outstanding. Here was the *vrai* Bolshoi, but the next item restored the gloom. Anyone seeing Gleb Evdokimov at Covent Garden in 1956 might have said that here was the ideal Bluebird. On the showing of his performance at the Albert Hall, they would have been wrong. Here his dancing was unexpectedly flabby, lacking in style, and surprisingly earthbound. Far better was his partner, Nina Fyedorova, a beautiful dancer whose work was only slightly marred by a slight tendency to poke her head forward.

It was interesting to see an excerpt from Igor Moiseyev's first classical ballet *Spartacus.* This adagio rapturously danced by the warm-hearted Ushakova and the lithely athletic Alexander Begak has aroused quite an amount of hostile criticism, with its *art nouveau* posturings, its conventional Soviet lifts and rhapsodic flower-throwings. Yet I am loath to discount the ballet completely on this one fragment. It is also to the point that the very strangeness of the Russian choreographic idiom makes us perhaps oversensitive of its repetitions when seen in concert excerpts. On the other hand it must be admitted that Khatchaturian's music sounded adequate but dull, although perhaps no duller than much Western ballet music, and a good deal prettier.

The tiny *Russian Dance* for Varlamova and Levashev which followed was a little gem of feeling, a spring-like evocation in the folk idiom of young and innocent love, and it was performed with that Stanislavsky-like identification that makes the Soviet dancers so poetically articulate.

From this moment on the Bolshoi programme hardly looked back, the clouds almost completely dissipated and the group proceeded to blaze away magnificently in the manner we remembered from their 1956 visit. To English audiences Messerer's *Spring Waters* will perhaps always recall Bogomolova and Vlasov, and it must be admitted that the Albert Hall couple — Fyedorova and Khomutov — were not really their equal. Yet for all this the nymph-like radiance of Fyedorova, riding on the crest of the music as if blown by the wind, made the ideal foil for Khomutov's protective strength. Khomutov himself looked something like Hedda Gabler's vision of "a poet with vine leaves in his hair", and we may be sure that Hedda would have cared less than us when he omitted the *doubles sauts de basque* from the choreography!

The ungrateful task of following this infallible show-stopper fell to Smirnova and Georgi Farmanyants in Vainonen's *pas de deux* from *The Flames of Paris.* Smirnova is an exceptionally clean dancer with a swiftness and delicacy more common to the Danes than the Russians. She seems to be among the most Western of Soviet dancers and her performance here was delightful, missing distinction by only a hair's-breadth. Farmanyants, our most frequent and one of our most adored Soviet visitors soon showed himself to be in top form, thus compensating both us and himself for his sub-standard appearances at Covent Garden in 1956. Farmanyants is not truly a classical dancer, yet he has so much fire and spirit, individuality and strength, that everything he touches is given a personal brilliance.

After the interval a madly coquettish Tikhomirnova and a mildly embarrassed Khomutov danced a deplorable *pas de deux* to Khatchaturian's *Masquerade Waltz.* No choreographer was credited for this on the programme. Possibly the dancers made it up as they went along. Another Khatchaturian — Karen, this time, not his better-known uncle Aram—provided the music for the next number, Zvyagina's Azerbaidjanian dance *The Pheasant.* This had something of the moving heroism of Ulanova's *The Dying Swan* and was poignantly danced by this supple and expressive artist.

If Timofeyeva was disappointing in the *Swan Lake,* she was triumphantly successful in the good old Minkus *pas de deux* from *Don Quixote.* Choreographically this version, ascribed to Alexander Gorsky was, I thought, less interesting than that common in the West, but it was stunningly well danced. Timofeyeva sparkled like a diamond tiara, her purity and multi-coloured brilliance resembling a living flame. There

THE PHEASANT: Zvyagina in the Azerbaidjanian dance which depicts the hunting of the pheasant. This picture shows the beautiful back-bends of Zvyagina for which she is justly famous. *Photo: Dominic.*

is remarkable elegance here, and technically her dancing with its easy extensions was a joy to watch. In virile Boris Khokhlov she has the ideal partner, matching her *panache* with *panache,* while dancing with a dazzling lyrical virtuosity. But why, why take calls in the middle of a *coda*?

The excerpt from Jakobson's famous ballet *Shurale,* was chiefly notable for the fascinating performance by Levashev as an evil water sprite, which recalled his remarkable Rothbart in *Swan Lake.* (It was a pity that the season did not show enough of the versatile Levashev, or, for that matter, Rikhter.) A solo *Classical Variation* by Gorsky to some very Drigo sounding Drigo was notable only for the dancing of Smirnova. But this was only a build-up for Farmanyant's celebrated Gopak from *Taras Bulba.* This, with its huge leaps and its massive spins, was given with all the fantastic control and reserved strength that are the trade-mark of Farmanyants' artistry.

It was only a pity that after this the performance had to end on a note of bathos with a ludicrously reduced version of Lavrovsky's *Walpurgis Night.* In its full version this exuberant farrago to Gounod has a splendidly vulgar rightness, and Lavrovsky's mass choreographic effects are disconcertingly impressive. Reduced to six dancers, one of whom is an unquenchably arch Tikhomirnova, and another an off-form Evdokimov, the result is grisly. There was, however, some eloquent dancing in the *pas de trois* from Karelskaya (here at her best), Fyedorova and Smirnova.

2nd programme

THE second programme opened with an awful warning. Fyedorova and the here somewhat stolid Zhdanov danced a highly commendable adagio from *The Sleeping Beauty,* but the version they danced, attributed to Messerer, was so inferior to the Petipa original that I felt much the same kind of disquiet I would if I walked into the National Gallery and found that someone had daubed an alien moustache on a well-loved portrait.

Ushakova and Khomutov then danced a quasi-Oriental *pas de deux* out of the *Schéhérazade* harem, which featured a guided-missile jump by Ushakova and a one-handed run-off by Khomutov, which added more to the gaiety of nations than the Oriental atmosphere. For all that it was well danced, and there was even a certain craftsmanship in the choreography. If there was any merit in Smirnova's solo called *Prelude,* choreographed by Varlamov to Prokofiev, I missed it completely.

The Waltz from Fokine's *Les Sylphides* — almost identical with the version known in the West — received an interesting performance from Timofeyeva, who was given insufficient support, both emotionally and physically, by Zhdanov. When during the third programme she was partnered by Khokhlov, together they produced a performance of aerial poetry that would be difficult, though not impossible, to match in the West.

At a first seeing Varlamov's *Russian Dance* to music by Dunayevski, was almost obscured by the enormity of the costumes. Sateen blouses for the boys and roses-roses-all-the-way costumes for the girls, recalled the worst extravagances of the Moiseyev troupe's costuming. Yet after the initial shock of this had worn away, the item was not without considerable merit. Rikhter was particularly good in this dance which was vigorously given by the normal "character sextet". I am tempted to say that the *Giselle* Peasant *pas de deux* which followed reintroduced Evdokimov to London. For, especially during the last week, in this he was once more the dancer who had won all hearts at Covent Garden. His *ballon,* his perfect feet, his elevation and style, all added up to as fine a performance of this *pas de deux* as we are likely to see. Smirnova, who always seems to project an unfailing good humour, gave a deliciously well mannered performance, full of elusive charm and especially memorable for the remarkable technical control of the *adagio* passages.

Zvyagina's Carnival Dance from Vainonen's *Mirandolina* provided another example of her exquisitely under-stated virtuosity, with its remarkable back-bends and wonderful sense of movement. This was, like *The Pheasant,* character dancing of the very highest order. In the *Black Swan pas de deux,* Karelskaya and, to a lesser extent, Khokhlov, varied somewhat in their performances. Good from the first, by the end of the week they were producing stunning performances, most convincingly acted and danced with a breadth and grandeur that was good to see. On the last night Karelskaya excelled herself with fantastic balances, including one fabulous unsupported turn *en attitude.*

After the interval we had *Ivan Susanin* again, followed by Jakobson's *The Hunter and the Bird,* a curiously-old-fashioned dance to Grieg, that had Begak almost literally holding Tikhomirnova in the palm of his hand, while she fluttered her arms valiantly. This showed off Tikhomirnova's technical accomplishment to better advantage than did most of her rôles.

Like so many of the classical excerpts, *The Nutcracker pas de deux* suffered from inferior choreography, this time by Vassily Vainonen. Timofeyeva and Khokhlov showed the romantic and lyrical side to their bravura brilliance to splendid effect. In the third week Karelskaya, less physically suited to the rôle than either Timofeyeva or the fragile Chistova who had danced it in Croydon, appeared in the Adagio, partnered by Zhdanov.

I was intrigued to see choreography by Kasyan Goleizovsky, a choreographer of some repute in the experimental years of Soviet ballet after the Revolution, and who is said to have had some influence on the young Balanchine. This *Gypsy Dance* from *Don Quixote* (music by Zhelobinsky *not* Minkus) proved extremely interesting. It was virtually a solo for Varlamova, that built up to a climax with ever-mounting tension. Varlamova as the gipsy girl, a heroine straight out of Dostoievsky, danced with abandon to give a performance of haunting beauty.

Evdokimov's party piece, an Armenian Dance from Khatchaturian's *Gayaneh,*

Continued on page 29.

Return to Moscow

by A. V. COTON

In last month's Dance and Dancers, **A. V. Coton,** The Daily Telegraph's **dance critic sent specially to Russia, wrote about his first impressions of ballet and its teaching in Moscow and Leningrad. Having seen the schools and performances at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre and at Leningrad's Kirov Theatre, he now returns to Moscow to take a second look and also to crystalise some of his thoughts about the company which has possibly proved to be Russia's most welcome export to England, America and the mainland of Europe.**

Saturday, May 21. Back in Moscow and at the Hotel Ukraine the first thing I find is that somebody's inefficiency has failed to provide my long-ago booked tickets for the ballet. I compromise by demanding some sort of ticket for the Bolshoi that evening and swear that, at any cost and no matter at whose inconvenience, I shall get into the Bolshoi for the Sunday matinée. In hotel lobby fall (metaphorically) into arms of English choreographer and producer *en route* to Australia via Moscow and Delhi, so sweep them with me into taxi and we make the Bolshoi just in time. . . . Just in time for Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tale of the Tsar Saltan,* which strikes me as the epitome of all that its composer had to say musically and, additionally, seems to be the epitome of what Russian audiences demand (or are given by the producers ?) in the way of spectacular opera.

Scene after scene, roughly, I should say seventeen, of complex and ingenious architecture representing a Russia that never was, except possibly in the librettist's imagination. A nine-minute scene, sung by two principals, has about twenty peasants, a group of soldiers, a handful of priests, assorted milkmaids, cooks, dwarfs, grooms as parts of the décor. The leading characters can scarcely be seen (as far up as the whiskers) for their swathings of purple velvet and tissue, embroidered gloves, green boots, gold belts, etc., etc. The supers, too, look like some Bakst illustration of one of the more opulent carnivals given at Petersburg by the Empress Catherine. Nobody — but positively nobody — in a Russian opera ever has less than eight or nine changes of costume with about fifteen pounds weight of gold and silver tissue, everyone gets into fresh wig and make-up between every act.

I don't believe that Rimsky-Korsakov thought of it like this; and it seems likely that this extravagant riot of dress, set and properties (plus, of course, a fantasy ballet of demons and fairies and water-sprites done in all-over tights and point shoes) is a result of the government-inspired policy of Socialist Realism. Quite simply, "every picture tells a story" — and it is a story of the glory or heroism or epic quality of Russia and the Russians. Perhaps we outsiders tend to take this too seriously ? It seems likely that the doctrine of Socialist Realism is simply the Old Order writ new. Through most of Russia's history, Russian arts have been didactic; subject to rigid censorship always, the artist has grown up artistically with the notion of having to toe some sort of line and it is probably quite inconceivable to a Russian artist to create any work which does not involve some obvious "content".

Sunday, May 22. I inform my guide-interpreter that, whatever strings have to be pulled, whoever has to be disturbed, *we are going to the Bolshoi matinée* of *The Humped-Backed Horse.* We taxi round to agencies (all seats sold), to the box-office (locked), to the theatre management's office (nobody here today), to the stage-door keeper (looks of silent contempt). Two frisky little *corps-de-ballet* girls bounce through the door, chattering and giggling, but the Silent One (who looks as if he has a pistol in his pocket and wouldn't mind using it) won't let them through until they produce their "dokumenti". When, bad-tempered, a few days ago I said, "Is it a State secret that Ulanova is — or isn't — dancing tonight?" I did not realise how near the mark I was.

Under the portico I learn exactly what the expression "a milling throng" means; about a hundred citizens are trying to buy whatever tickets are going, and even if it means speculators I insist that Miss Olga and I join in and try our luck. In company with a charming Indian gentleman and his hefty Russian lady companion, we — somehow; and I will never quite know how it happened — procure four gallery tickets. Upstairs the Indian is distressed when he sees "Eight roubles" marked on the tickets, for he has underpaid the seller, a voluble, earnest-looking lady in a rather shabby two-piece. We are both full of remorse, remembering her passionate and tearful squabble with a bad-tempered young Air Force man, who, we became convinced, was trying to cheat her out of her legitimate profit.

We soon found how wrong we were; for she turned up in the neighbouring group of seats and explained that her "scene" with the airman was because of his greed, wanting too many tickets. She was selling tickets issued to her school (she was a teacher) and not wanted by pupils; at the marked prices, of course, so that somebody should have seats otherwise wasted. She was carrying, tenderly, a handful of pathetic buttercups, perhaps the only flowers to be had apart from hothouse blooms (at very hothouse prices). There aren't many flowers in Russia, and people will pick a few blossoms of the kind we don't even look at, and carry them around all day. Hikers returning from a day in the country, failing to find even a few daisies, will earnestly clutch some twigs of oak or willow . . . and more and more, there are wonderfully human moments in Russian life exactly echoing scenes from Tolstoy and Chekhov and Gogol.

Most of the gallery crowd sat in its shirtsleeves, sucked sweets, chattered non-stop, combed its hair, read the programme notes aloud while the action was going on . . . just like home. The ballet, a five-acter, follows the original libretto used by Saint-Leon in 1864 but has a new score (Shchedrin) and new choreography by Vainonen and Malyarevsky. Time and again, with all these modern big ballets I am convinced that, as spectacles, they must exactly resemble those four-hour monsters that used to happen at the Empire and Alhambra in the 1880's and 1890's. In fact, they are complex, diffuse stories with dozens of characters and much of the action done in rather naturalistic mime, but with plenty of dancing. Though often the dancing does not move the story forward and we get an episode of pure Russian folk steps, then a slab of imitation-Petipa, and a luscious "oriental" number. (The Russians have a passion for "foreign parts" in their ballets and most foreign parts look alike—being a highly romantic vision of that Glamorous East that we associate with pantomimes of *Sinbad the Sailor* and *Aladdin.)*

Another point, and — probably like an amateur archaeologist reconstructing the architecture of a whole city from a single brick — I wonder if this excessive lengthiness in both operas and ballets is not, as it were, a natural condition developed from the basic forms of Russian folk tales ? Tales of magic, heroism, strange adventure were passed on by word-of-mouth for longer in the Russian way of life than in any other Western country; and much of the early written literature (before Lomonossov injected a contemporary European style into it) was prolix and repetitive. Like the idea of Bigness and the idea of Plenty of Time, the Russians are conditioned to the idea of slowness and detail in their story-telling. Some such hypothesis certainly explains, as nothing else convincingly can, the fact that in their opera and ballet the Russians work on a basis of a spectacle occupying three acts (at least) and three-and-a-half hours (probably).

Another — and to me, slightly ominous — notion in every spectacle I saw is that guards, soldiers, attendants on royalty always carry spears, partisans or swords of excessive size and made up to look dreadfully real ; and they always mime with them as if it would be a real pleasure to use them. Perhaps this is just a bit of that old-fashioned Russian humour; but it is one of the aspects of their opera and ballet which is always made to appear very naturalistic. (The "lower orders", both then and now, are being kept reminded that authority has a long and strong and ever-ready arm ? ?)

The same evening at the Stanislavsky I see *Esmeralda,* in which Carlotta Grisi appeared here in 1844 ; the libretto, though re-worked by Tikhomirov and Bourmeister, seems to be the original (see C. W. Beaumont, *Complete Book of Ballets).* The Pugni music has also been re-worked to some extent, by Glière, and certainly Bourmeister has altered what one guesses the original choreography to have been. I (and, in due time, you too) just have to get used to the style of ballet in which long episodes are worked out in mime — often good, sometimes terribly obvious — with the dances forming links, or bridging passages, or now and then legitimate climaxes to scenes . . . but almost never do the dances set out, develop, colour and illuminate the story-line and the characters in the manner of Western ballet. Yet what goes on on stage makes its effect because the miming and dancing are done by what we must reckon the world's *most complete professionals.* Bovt is the Esmeralda, but the most impressive character is the Quasimodo of Terentyov whose performance had something of the same pure and shattering power

PLISETSKAYA IN TWO ROLES: Maya Plisetskaya, one of the most important Bolshoi ballerinas after Ulanova, in two rôles. Left, in the title rôle in Laurencia *which she created in 1956. Right, with Fadeyechev, in the third act of* Le Lac des Cygnes.

that, earlier, I've only met in Olivier's *Oedipus*.

Monday, May 23. A day of discovery and exploration and modest excitements. My second session in Moscow is part of a timetable planned before I arrived in Russia — a six-day flexible period in which, if inducement offered, I could have gone off to some other city to see local ballet. The lack of enough detailed news and also the lack of exuberant welcome to and fascination with my activities, inclines me to spend all possible time in Moscow watching more classes, digging into the historical background, studying the theatre museum. Mr. Yuri Bakhroushin, archivist at the Bolshoi School and Curator of the museum bearing his name (founded last century by his father) speaks nearly flawless English and has a true historian's grasp of Russian ballet. He can construct in awesome detail the lives and careers of any past or present Russian composer, ballerina, choreographer; he tells (and in a way that fully convinces and always makes sense) just how and why the Petersburg School always differed from the Moscow, and why the various rivalries arose which shaped the growth of ballet in different ways in the two cities.

A hundred years ago, dancers still went to school every day (not just to classes) to go on learning more mime and acting and music, as well as partnering and character work. At that time the school was wholly a "Theatre School", its students enlisting at first for a three-year trial period (drama, singing, dance, music and painting); after the third year they began to specialise and those who would not become good dancers were syphoned off to the Conservatoire to become musicians, or to the Theatre School to become actors. Here in the West we know too little of Gorsky (or of Ivanov); both are respected there for bringing back dancing into ballet after what the Russians consider largely a decadent period (i.e. some of it under Petipa). Like Fokine, his coeval, Gorsky was an innovator; of Fokine he said, "We share the same aim but we follow different paths". It was Gorsky who started a course of training in which the first year's work was done in the centre and only in the second year did students go to the *barre*. He believed that too much reliance on the *barre* in the early years tended to make them too much alike in style as dancers.

Fokine would come to rehearse a ballet with a score and his written notation, set the dances, tell the dancers, "You have learned it; now you can begin to act it". Gorsky arrived with an outline of the choreography in his head, stopped and started, and re-started saying, "Does that feel right; if not, let us alter it". But it was Fokine who made the dancers try to understand what various steps and movements were for. He would say, "Why are you using the *pointe*? Because you must feel that that is the way to get up into the air. Why use the arabesque? Because that is to feel that you can fly forward like a bird."

In the museum we inspect casts of feet of famous ballerinas, hold their shoes in our hands so that for the first time one really knows how precise, how arrow-like, how superbly beautiful were the feet of such dancers as Taglioni, Istomina, Marie Danilova. There are scores and libretti of dozens of ballets more than a century old; décors by the dozen, working models of scenes in contemporary ballet productions, complete with lighting. I see in the cellar masses of stuff which can't be on show because of lack of space: pastel portraits of Alexandra Danilova and the romantically handsome Balanchine in their graduating rôles at the age of eighteen, sketches of scenes and costumes, views of theatres and schools, scores, handbills, posters, photographs, costumes and fragments of costumes.

The same evening I visit the exhibition of British paintings at the Pushkin Museum; those up to about 1910 are making a good impression; seven well-briefed guides discourse on the life, theories, achievements of Constable, Reynolds, Turner, Hogarth (a great favourite) to earnest crowds. The modern pictures — Nicolson, Pasmore, Sutherland, Frost, Scott, Wynter, Ceri Richards, etc. — are in one room, the sight of which would make a subject for Rowlandson. The public push and peer, point, giggle, sneer, laugh, look worried, wave arms, deride each other, slap backs; perhaps three-quarters of them think this modern art unbelievably decadent, even wicked, or at best just plain silly. But the others, bright-eyed youngsters, mostly students and nearly all speaking a lot of English or French or German, are in a state of positive ecstasy — not, as I quickly find out, at the privilege of seeing English paintings, or even with admiration for these ones on view — but at the unassailable evidence that somewhere in the world painters can paint exactly whatever vision they have, and the result is put on view, is looked at, is discussed, is (in short) taken at its face value.

A wonderful old man, all Yellow Book whiskers and topaz tie-pin, sits like Job surrounded by his tormentors; he is probably a painter or a painting teacher and the young men and women are refusing to believe how terribly sinful all this dreadful painting is. Beside him, white with passion, argues a delicately handsome youth; later I find that he works in a clerical job but writes poetry and wants to do nothing else but write. He has never seen a modern abstract painting in his life until now; he asks what I think of such paintings ("And I suppose you have been seeing such things all your life?") We talk about the poets and novelists whose work we know in common; he admires Wordsworth and Yeats and Keats (he even knows their differing pronunciations correctly) and is pleased that, entirely in a foreign way, I admire Pushkin.

He thinks he should study Chaucer and I try to encourage him, even while I point out the problems he'll have to overcome in learning a new sort of English. "And so you are visiting us to see our ballet? Mm. I think our ballet is ridiculous; it is not of life, mostly it is of stupid people".

I try to point out differences of structure and aim and effect as between *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* and, say, *Flames of Paris, The Red Poppy,* etc. "But," he protests, "always in our ballet there is — how I say — literature, giving lessons, teachings. They tell me you have ballets that are just of dancings and with nothing else but people who look beautiful, even if they are boys or girls." I am touched and pleased by this (where on earth has he been told about, or seen pictures of, probably *Serenade, Palais de Cristal* or *Symphonic Variations*?). And his English, though slightly at fault, is distinct and precise; he is shy about saying who taught him, or where. He goes on, and this is probably the most heartening utterance I heard from a single Russian, considering the regimenting of artists that goes on on all levels, "Ballets must not be filled of literature (by 'literature' he means messages, meanings, morals); and music must not be filled, and — please you understand me? — even poetry must not have literature on top of it. Do you understand me?" I believe I did.

But let us not make too much of the workings of Socialist Realism — even if, as I was told, the painting instructors in Moscow teach all day, rush off home and paint an abstract, then hide it in the cellar and take turns to give parties to show off their one "corrupt" picture to their pals. The Top Boys at the Ministry of Culture take their work seriously and believe that they are guiding a still comparatively unsophisticated people along the right lines towards an ultimate understanding of some form of art proper to the Soviet way of life. Many foreign theatre productions are imported — as well as sports teams; several Western ballerinas have, by now, guested at the Bolshoi, and the Paris Opéra Ballet's visit a couple of years ago has sown seeds that, some time, will produce what may be, for us, startling flowers.

The American touring production of *My Fair Lady* was visiting three big Russian cities when I was there; it played in Leningrad to packed houses every night. The Intourist guide-girls used it to polish their English (in their literary appreciation Shaw is, next to Shakespeare, the greatest English writer ever) and my own guide had a pocket edition of the play-script and had most of the lyrics memorised and tried out her pronunciation on me. The Night the Summit Broke Down, instead of bringing an air of gloom and misery, was the time when a group of the wealthier sort of Leningraders, dining in our hotel, started up a spontaneous rock-'n'-roll session with the girls from *My Fair Lady*. But the Ministry of Culture won't have a production of *West Side Story* (which, apparently, someone has been trying to sell them), for, they say, "We will not show things which glorify violence and brutality in our theatres. We are interested in shows which have brightness and fun; we want to give our people a chance to get over their inferiority complex about the West."

Tuesday, May 24. At the Bolshoi School watch more classes; Yevdokimov with a group of sixteen-year-old boys, handling them like a *primo torero* facing a set of dangerous young bulls. These boys have as much temperament as a clutch of contraltos, only here instead of taking it out on their families or in public, they vent it on one another and, if he lets them get away with it, the teacher. He deals with it by ignoring it; sets the most obstreperous one a fiendishly difficult *enchâinement,* all wide soft jumps interspersed with *double tours en l'air.* The boy goes through it; Yevdokimov looks casually out of the window, scrubs out his cigarette with his heel (he appears to be the world's only remaining teacher who is, in class, a non-stop smoker) rises softly like a waft of smoke from a fire and shoots round the room like a runaway rocket. I nearly rise off my chair like another rocket in my excitement. The teacher finishes, doesn't look at the boy, says nothing for a while, gazes dreamily out of the window; then stands near the piano and, very softly, nearly apologetically, says "Again." And they all do it again — and again — and again. That is what I feel inclined to call good teaching; be able to do it yourself much better than the pupil but don't rub the fact into him; just show him, and if necessary, keep on showing him, if he has anything in him, he'll get it right in the end.

Surprise! Surprise! At the Bolshoi tonight I see what I incline to think the most successful, balletically speaking, of the modern big ballets — *Flames of Paris.* Its melodramatic story tells of a fictional episode of the Revolution in 1792, with Lords and Ladies trampling the faces of the Poor well and truly into the dust and, in return, getting all that was due to them. But its plot is well constructed (it is a sort of Baroness Orczy story in reverse) with Court scenes including dances, shootings and stabbings, an attack by the mob, vast dancing celebrations in the Paris squares and a terrific finale with eighty or ninety dances on stage at once.

The wonderous Lepeshinskaya is the heroine, Jeanne, with Farmanyants as the revolutionary soldier, Phillipe, who befriends her. Compared with any other modern Russian ballet that I've seen, it has terrific pace, some fine action-filled choreography, crowd scenes that Massine couldn't better, and a lively and very suitable score — positively Asafiev's best. It was made as far back as 1933 by Vainonen (was that somehow an accidental Golden Year for choreographers?) when Massine made *Choreartium* and Tudor made *Atalanta* and Jooss made *The Green Table.*

RECENT GRADUATES: Left, Pozdnyakova as Natalia. Right, Maximova who graduated in 1958 and was such a hit when the Bolshoi gave The Stone Flower *during their season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.*

Wednesday, May 25. Thursday, May 26. Now begins a madly packed final two days during which, of course, all sorts of things happen at once that there won't be time to deal with. For instance, I meet real Russian critics who have at last discovered that I've been more or less sitting on their doorsteps for about two weeks. Naturally, we all want to talk about *everything* that goes on in ballet all over the world, comparing notes, softly deriding one another's ideas about our national ballets, cautiously milking each other for opinions about our several critical colleagues, trying to find out how much gossip we've heard about one another; all very matey and warm-hearted. We meet in the Bolshoi School archives room, swapping notes and ideas and reminiscences, making plans to correspond and send books and magazines in both directions.

We all gather at the Bolshoi for the final rehearsal of the year's passing-out show of the Bolshoi School (for which they get the use of the theatre for several days; have three full orchestra rehearsals; have every ballet fully dressed in new costumes) and watch the "new crop". My colleagues are inclined to be sniffy about some of the talent — usual critics' tale— "Not half as good as last year's lot; look at So-and-So, a famous ex-ballerina's daughter, but not a patch on her mother at that age, etc., etc." The programme is *Chopiniana* (our *Les Sylphides*) but with

NEW STAR: Ryabinkina, who A. V. Coton hoped to see in Le Lac des Cygnes *but whose performance was cancelled, in two rôles. Left, as Odette in* Le Lac des Cygnes *and, right, in a* Valse *to Strauss music.*

set and lighting that make it seem to happen on a delicate April morning; next *The Dance Lesson,* a cleverly-tailored reduction of Lander's *Etudes* which they had so admired when the Paris Opéra Ballet showed it. (This is one of the real signs that non-story ballet has made a strong impression in Russia; now let's note what happens when they see *Serenade, Stars and Stripes, Western Symphony, Four Temperaments, Symphonic Variations, The Planets,* and a few other eye-openers.)

This is followed by a divertissement including several pieces such as we have been given by various Russian concert groups in London, and a bit of *Spartak* and some Ukrainian dances. Here I ask the unanswerable question (not aloud): "Why make folk-dance into a stylised theatre spectacle?" As, for example, the Moiseyev Troupe do; in an age when ballet has yet to absorb thousands of elements from twenty hardly-used folk dance systems, I don't see the point of training in as rigorous a manner as for classical ballet to perform what is, all too literally, pure folk dance.

But my excitement has been rising for four whole days, ever since I found that the billing for tonight's *Swan Lake* promised Ryabinkina as Odette-Odile. Between the school matinée and the evening I do a bit of shopping (sad because so little choice and sadder because so expensive), visit the Theatre Museum again, distribute a few modest presents (Penguins and boxes of English chocolates), pack, dine, get back to Bolshoi Theatre. Inside, programme looks a bit odd, read it again and nearly explode with mixture of despair, anger, helplessness on discovering that — with, of course, no explanation, and her name still on posters at the door — Ryabinkina has been removed and is substituted by Karelskaya. But no one ever really knows, or if they know will tell you, about such things; possibly illness, possibly the ballet-master thought her not good enough yet, perhaps she had offended someone? ? ? ? In Russia, as I said earlier, such domestic matters seem to be treated as State secrets; this is one of the damnably silly things which lead one to think that some other ballet systems nearer home are not the only ones where childishness sometimes takes over at an important level.

This girl has been built up carefully and was launched last year, at seventeen, in *Swan Lake;* a very early chance even here, and all accounts suggest that she is of phenomenal quality. So my last performance is, inevitably, a rather depressing one, despite Karelskaya's slow-paced, opulent, neat, rather 19th-century type Odette-Odile.

How much there is still to weigh out of all I have seen, heard, pondered on, discussed. A few odd matters suggest themselves: although Stepanov notation was once widely taught, it is not much in use now. Research is going on into the Yoga method of deep breathing, in case it *might* have something that could be used in the training method. Any foreign dance company appearing in Russia automatically is put on television to reach the biggest audience. In both schools, boys and girls at 16 are given charge of a group of six juniors, whose private life and homework they supervise, acting as a sort of "junior parent"; it gives all parties an outlet for affection and a stimulus for respect. Have another theory about the students' particularly the females', pallor: can they literally sweat something out of their systems, or is it a peculiar kind of blood-reaction? Some years ago a group of visiting doctors who hadn't before seen a ballet school, finding that after one exercise a girl had a heartbeat rate of 300 a minute, seriously asked how many students died each year as a result of the strenuous training! The latest Western "Method", i.e. teach them lying on the floor, was tried out under Gorsky sixty years ago and though partly useful was found to retard the development of certain muscle-groups, so was discontinued.

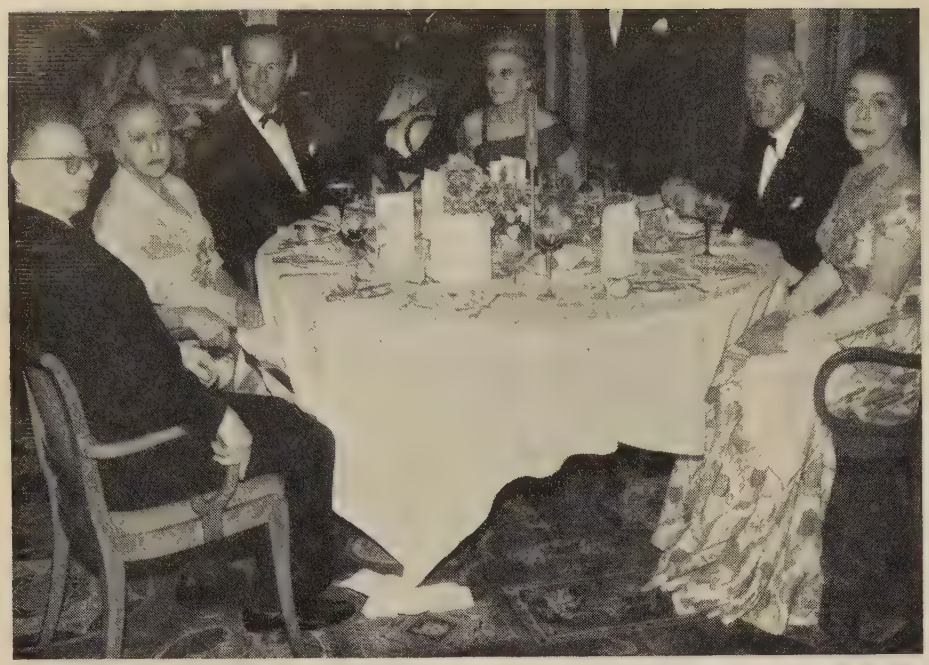
Although the interest in the "pure dance" ballet is growing, some Russians are still concerned that Fokine didn't enunciate a Sixth Principle (you guess which one!). Unless it is snowing blizzards or there are thunderstorms going on, at each school, every evening, all the pupils have to take one hour in the open air (they can go in a park and sit reading a book, but they must get clear air before going to bed). What else? A great deal, which can perhaps wait until it is more fully absorbed and can be mentioned comparatively in relation to other systems of ballet performance and ballet training.

I discussed most of these impressions, and a few others, with a great ballet-going friend, who has seen all the Russians we have had in the West in recent years, he looked rather solemn, then in a voice of mingled horror and delight, he said, "What on earth is going to happen to us when the Russians discover *choreography*?" And I can only say, What, indeed!

NEXT MONTH

NATALIA ROSLAVLEVA writes of the recent production of Paganini **at the** Bolshoi: **BALLET IN CZECHOSLAVAKIA by JAN REY and BERNARD ORNA; THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL by CLIVE BARNES; Reviews and pictures of FESTIVAL BALLET's** Bourée Fantasque **and THE ROYAL BALLET's new Covent Garden season.**

October Dance and Dancers **on sale, September 20**



CELEBRATING THIRTY YEARS: At the dinner party given by the Dancers' Circle at the Dorchester to celebrate thirty years of Ballet Rambert are, at the head table: David Ellis (Associate Director and Rambert's son-in-law), Tamara Karsavina, Sir Kenneth Clark, Marie Rambert, Philip Richardson and Lady Clark.

curtain up!

The Gulbenkian cornucopia

FIVE years after the death of the founder of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation comes the news of even further gifts to the arts. The great thing about this wonderfully generous trust is that the main accent is on progress and encouragement to organisations that receive little help from other money-distributing organisations. For instance, the English Opera Group have received £1,000 towards the pre-production costs of Benjamin Britten's recent opera, *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* while the St. Pancras Arts Festival had £500 towards the cost of producing Haydn's rarely-heard opera, *Il Mondo della Luna,* as well as modern operas by Milhaud and Blacher.

In a previous year Ballet Rambert received a gift which helped them to mount a new work and this year two other British ballet companies benefit. Western Theatre Ballet have already been promised a grant of £1,000 for administration and now they have another gift of the same amount presumably to help them mount a new work.

London's Festival Ballet, who up to this point have not done too well when there is any handing-out about, have now been given £1,000 for commissioning a new ballet. It is hoped by everyone that this will go towards the costs of mounting Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque* rather than defraying any costs incurred by the disastrous *Bonaparte à Nice (1796)* which made such an unfortunate opening to their present London season. This latter gift is given by the Gulbenkian Trust in the hope that the London County Council may be prepared to grant the much larger sum required for production costs. Let us hope that the L.C.C. take the hint and do indeed help this company which has largely been responsible for the popularity of their own Festival Hall.

What they thought

WHAT did *they* think of British ballet? They, of course, being the dancers from the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet who were recently at the Albert Hall who had the chance to see one programme from each of the major British ballet companies.

What they said was interesting. Of *La Fille Mal Gardée,* which they saw on the last night of the Royal Ballet's recent Covent Garden season, their main comment was that the standard of dancing had improved. They thought our dancers hadn't much idea of how to act like peasants (which is true), but they ignored the fact that Ashton was not trying to make a realistic ballet (which is equally true). They thought that the ballet would have a great success with the Moscow audiences and some are reported as having been tremendously impressed by the choreography.

On the first night of the Ballet Rambert season at Sadler's Wells, I found myself sitting immediately behind a group of them and watched their reaction. They said very little but they applauded politely but perfunctorily whenever the rest of the audience did. They were obviously not amused by *The Wise Monkeys* and their only spontaneous enthusiasm was for Lucette Aldous's solo in *Czernyana.*

After *Bonaparte,* on the opening night of Festival Ballet's London season they were again polite, though Farmanyants was seen coming down a staircase looking dazed and rather grim. They did, however, express praise for Gilpin in the tone of a guest who is determined to say the right thing but doesn't expect to be believed.

During this particular evening of ballet at Festival Hall, I heard someone remark that it was a pity that the Russian visitors had not seen our companies at their best. If only Rambert had done such-and-such a programme and Festival Ballet had only given so-and-so's work, how much better an impression they would have had. To which the reply was made by a Canadian visitor: "Yes, but they have seen a fair cross-section of what your companies have to show. If they got a bad impression, whose fault is it?"

New skies from now on

WHAT a to-do! Nearly every self-respecting opera house in the world

MICROPHONE MUDRAS: The Markova-Dolin partnership was one of the greatest ballet partnerships in British ballet. Since they parted professionally and went their respective ways, they have both given a considerable amount of their time to public utterance. It can be seen that they both employ the same sort of hand gestures when facing a microphone though both were in fact several hundred miles away from each other at the time. Markova is recording her BBC "Markova's Ballet Call" programme in London. Dolin is speaking at the Ballet Exhibition, organised by the Daily Express, *at John Lewis's in Manchester.*

has a cyclorama but up to now Covent Garden audiences have had to put up with skies that looked for all the world like dusty, badly-hung curtains. During the annual lay-off at the Garden, a new cyclorama, made by the best makers of such things, Lederer & Co, of Berlin, was installed. But it was not as easy as all that. It had been lying, resting presumably after its journey from Germany, in a disused garage in Kingston. Then one Sunday, with a police escort, its 64-foot length started to coil its way towards Bow Street where even more hazards had to be overcome because it was two feet longer than was expected. To get it through the scene door a gas street lamp had to be removed and then it was found that a shop would have to be opened so as to give it a straight run in. Tricky this, as being Sunday the owner was away and the shop locked. Eventually he was found and it now reposes where in fact it ought to have done for many years past.

However, this latecomer will be a very, very welcome resident and it is good to know that the Opera House is anxious to reform the various faults which some of us carping rogues find from time to time. Why, only the other day we were able to congratulate whoever was responsible for improving the hunting scene in *The Sleeping Beauty* by having the hunters chase the quarry instead of fleeing from it. There must be some self-congratulation going on, and rightly so, back-stage. However, I trust that Hamlet's advice to the players will not be forgotten. "I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir", they boasted. And you will remember his reply — "O, reform it altogether."

An honour deserved

TO celebrate Ballet Rambert's thirty years of existence, the Dancers' Circle gave a dinner for her at the Dorchester on July 24. It says a lot for the affection in which Marie Rambert is held that such a remarkably distinguished gathering cut short their week-ends away from London which somehow become more precious as the years go by. Of course, you want to know who was there and there was — but it would be almost easier to tell you who wasn't. However, there was Tamara Karsavina looking marvellous and she presented Rambert with a bouquet. Then there was Alicia Markova and she made a speech in which she said that the only difference of opinion she had ever had with Mim was about money — Rambert wanted to pay her 7/6 for a performance instead of ten bob but Markova stuck out for ten bob because she had to buy shoes and the performances were so late that she had to take a taxi home. Then there was Frederick Ashton and he made a speech in which she said that Marie Rambert was his mother. He was followed by John Gilpin who said that Marie Rambert was his mother and Frederick Ashton his father. By that time we were beginning to get a bit confused as to who was who in spite of the biography that Philip Richardson had given us in which he said that Rambert had married Ashley Dukes and they had two children — Lulu and Angela. So what relation they all are to Ashton and Gilpin, I just wouldn't know — but who cares, it was loads of fun anyway.

Then there was a sprinkling of ballet Dames around — Dame Ninette de Valois looking very handsome and rested after her holiday, and Dame Adeline Genée escorted by Anton Dolin. Foreign guests included Elsa Marianne von Rosen and her husband, the critic and producer, Allan Fridericia, also Denmark's Flemming Flindt. Rambert and Philip Richardson received the guests and she, in a long and flowing blue dress, managed to look younger than almost anyone present. The food was good too!

The Quiet Farewell

PIRMIN TRECU, I learn, has left the Royal Ballet for good because he was told that he would never really recover from the injury which has dogged him over the past three seasons. He tells me that eventually he plans to settle in London and teach dancing. But before doing this he has some exciting plans which involve visiting his native Spain to brush up his Spanish dancing and also, if all goes as he hopes, a visit to Moscow to learn something of Russian teaching methods.

Trecu has been one of the most popular male dancers in the company almost ever since he joined in 1947 and his very strong, Romantic and individual personality on stage has left its mark indelibly on many of the rôles he danced. He will be sorely missed but is sure of the good wishes of all in the new part of his career which he now enters.

I learn also, by a roundabout route, that some regular members of the Covent Garden audience wrote to the management expressing regret that Trecu had slipped so quietly out of the company while on the touring section's latest trip round the provinces. They asked whether he could not be allowed a proper "farewell" performance at Covent Garden in August. They were told, it appears, that this could be done. A great pity!

Mystery-ballets out, dancers in

FESTIVAL BALLET promised us a long-awaited revival of Ashton's *Vision of Marguerite* and everyone wanted to see it as it would have brightened the company's repertory. Less than a fortnight before the first night it was cancelled and *Le Spectre de la Rose* substituted. No explanation was offered for the change and enquiries have been met by hedging all round.

Equally mysterious is the fact that Festival Ballet have four guest artists and they have received little or no publicity. They are Olga Ferri from the Colon, Buenos Aires, Vladimir Skouratoff, Gabriella Lakatos and Ferenc Havas from the Budapest State Opera. As all these people are well known abroad it seems strange, to say the least, especially when you think of the publicity that has heralded the company's less worthy efforts.

happy birthday to...

		September
Lucette Aldous	Ballet Rambert	26
Howard da Silva	Canadian National Ballet	26
Yves Cousineau	Canadian National Ballet	27
Colin Worth	Canadian National Ballet	27
Shelia Melvin	London's Festival Ballet	28
Flemming Flindt	Royal Danish Ballet	30
Tanaquil le Clercq		1
Eric Bruhn	Royal Danish Ballet	3
Andrée Howard	British choreographer	3
Kenneth Bannerman	Ballet Rambert	4
Serge Grigorieff		5
Hélène Trailine		6
Rachel Holland	Ballet Rambert	7
Merle Park	The Royal Ballet	8
Lois Smith	Canadian National Ballet	8
Dusan Trninic	De Cuevas International Ballet	9
Nicole Raguis	Belgrade Opera Ballet	10
Jill Gregory	Royal Ballet Organisation	10
Barbara Walczak		13
Hans Meister	Canadian National Ballet	13
Ronald Emblen	London's Festival Ballet	14
Gaye Fulton	London's Festival Ballet	15
Dusanka Sifnios	Massine's Ballet Européen	15
Marjorie Tallchief	Paris Opéra Ballet	19
Kenneth Sudell	London's Festival Ballet	20
Susan Winterton	London's Festival Ballet	20
Lydia Lopokova		21

Dancer of Today

Photo: Roy Round

JOHN CHESWORTH

BORN in Manchester in 1930. Entered the Rambert School in 1950 after doing his National Service. Remained at the School for 18 months before joining the Company.

Creations: Elder Brother in Two Brothers; *Husband in* Hazaña. *Rôles: Gurn in* La Sylphide; *Duke in* Giselle; *Personage in* Les Masques; *Dago and Popular Song in* Façade; *Death in* Death and the Maiden; *Lover and Man she must Marry in* Jardin aux Lilas; *Italian Cavalier in* Gala Performance; *Young Man in* Variations on a Theme; *The Host in* Laiderette; *Leading rôles in:* Dark Elegies; Soirée Musicale; Carnival of Animals; Simple Symphony; Kalaidoscope; Winter Night; Czernyana; *Drunk in* Judgment of Paris.

JOHN CHESWORTH, principal male dancer of Ballet Rambert, is an ever-improving artist, who this season has possibly been giving one of the best performances of his career as Gurn in *La Sylphide*. He started dancing too late ever to develop a strong classical technique, but his exceptionally fine physique, good looks and masculinity, allied to his unusual skill as an actor, have made him an invaluable member of the Rambert Company.

He first attracted attention as an inventive comedian — sometimes too inventive — and the rôle of the Italian Cavalier in *Gala Performance* would never be the same without him — indeed he has by now practically rechoreographed it! Working with Norman Morrice in both *Two Brothers* and *Hazaña* he has given performances of remarkable dramatic power. At one time Chesworth showed a tendency towards over-playing, but he is now (especially in the Morrice ballets and *La Sylphide)* projecting characterisations of a credibility unusual even in Denmark and Russia, and almost unknown in England.

Further North

by GENE PALATSKY

Last month this American critic wrote about the Royal Danish Ballet Festival in Copenhagen. Now he travels further north to see THE ROYAL SWEDISH BALLET'S Festival in Stockholm.

THE Royal Swedish Ballet definitely has arrived. At the June opera and ballet festival in Stockholm, the company displayed the temperament and skill to dance an international repertoire, ranging through the Russian fairy-tale classics, hazardous Balanchine ballets and modern Swedish creations. While their stage manner will undoubtedly fluctuate as they develop and seek their right style under Mary Skeaping's guidance, the Royal Swedes already display a unity in style which seems to fit the national atmosphere — more open and, at the moment, less disciplined than their Danish neighbours, closer to the brusque musicality of the Americans. And underneath their vigour and apparent joy in dancing lies the gentle poignancy of the Swedish spirit.

The full-length *Swan Lake,* lavishly costumed and framed, showed off the maturity and depth of this company. The first act *pas de trois* and *pas de six* were both lively successes, though lacking the effective contrast of the English version. The Czardas and Mazurka and the Basque (not Spanish) and Neapolitan dances of the court scene were danced enthusiastically in the appropriate national styles. The Neapolitan dance, instead of Covent Garden's brisk *pas de deux,* is an enchanting *pas de huit,* with the girls clapping castanets and the boys strumming silent guitars.

The swans, in some lovely groupings by Mary Skeaping, were a smooth, musical contingent. They file in on *pointes* in the second act — as if drying off their feet — before bouncing into the familiar hops-arabesque-hops; and the last act curtain rises on a beautiful pattern, with the corps doubled over in swan-like postures. Both are successful departures from the Covent Garden production.

Most refreshing were the live faces and expressive movements of the first act peasants and third act party-goers, which contributed to the plot development.

The Swedes' logical practice is bringing on Odile after the national dances for an immediate Black Swan *pas de deux,* though there's a note of mystery in the Covent Garden procedure, with Odile arriving earlier and running off with Siegfried to do God Knows What during the court entertainments. And Benno is happily removed from the second act *adagio* until the final moment, when he holds Odette aloft as Siegfried looks on, a pace away, in admiration.

Both Mariane Orlando and Caj Selling restudied *Swan Lake* during two months of study in Leningrad this past winter and Orlando, particularly, is going through a stylistic digestive period. This gifted young ballerina moved in sculptured grace, though with some detachment, as the Swan Queen, never warming to the Prince until Von Rothbart beckons her away. It was the Black Swan *pas de deux* which emphasised the Russian influence. Shades of Plisetskaya! — with the bent arabesques and over-arched back. Her bravura display was the crowd-pleaser of the festival, but she must overcome a certain Russian crudeness in her style. Happy shades of Rowena Jackson! — every fourth *fouetté* was a triple!

Caj Selling wasn't so noticeably influenced by his Leningrad stay. He soared through the Black Swan *pas de deux* and, in the coda, dropped from perfect *double tours* on to one foot, still turning smoothly. Selling mimed a boyish, adoring Siegfried, believable throughout. Experience should make a *danseur noble* of this brilliant young dancer.

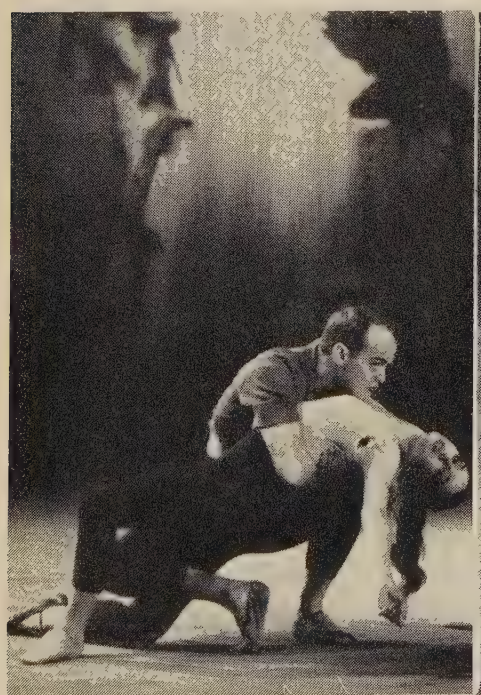
The Aurora of blonde, slender Gerd Andersson highlighted the glittering *Sleeping Beauty* production. Her technical assurance is lagging slightly behind her artistry as a ballerina — the Rose Adagio was a bit tentative, and she must learn to float through the Vision Scene — but she stepped daintily and precisely through her variations, with softly fluid arms and shoulders which might be carry-overs from her brief Bolshoi training this past winter. (Andersson and Wiweka Ljung were visitors to Moscow.) She fashioned a true fairy-tale princess, effervescent at her seventeenth birthday party, enchanted and elusive in the Vision Scene and elegant as a bride. Mario Mengarelli seemed a middle-aged Prince Charming, too stodgy for the rôle. (Their "fish dives" were replaced by less-dangerous fish poses, with Aurora pirouetting and then leaning, instead of leaping, into Florimund's arms in the familiar position.)

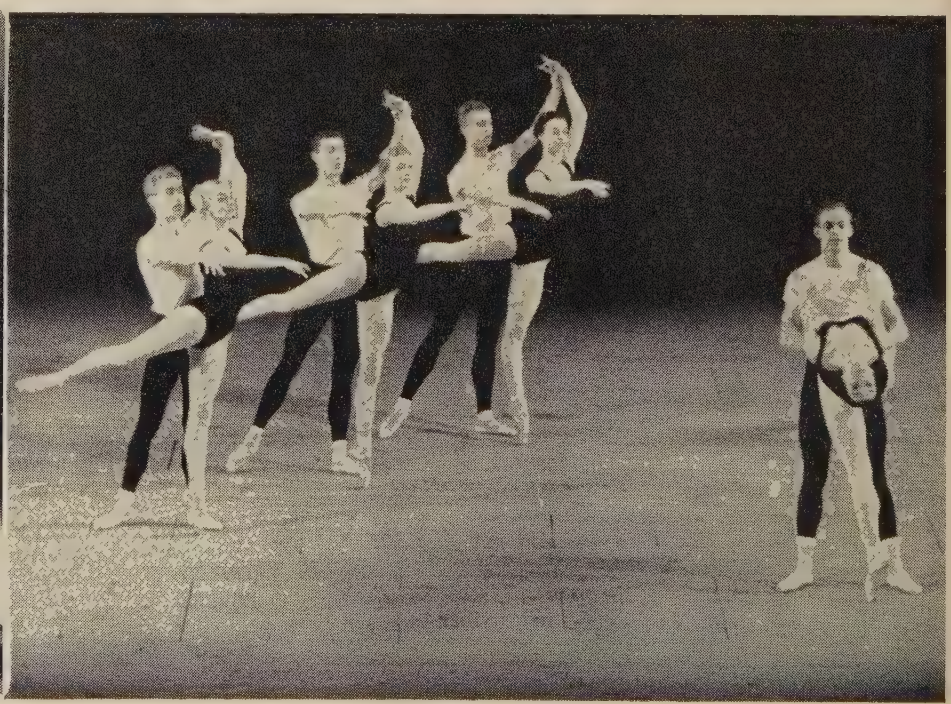
Shaping the destinies of Aurora and Florimund was the authoritative, stunning Lilac Fairy of Loulou Portefaix, a French-Swedish dancer with remarkable poise.

The grand spectacles had their untidy patches, reminders that time and growth are still needed to polish the Royal Ballet. Fortunately, *Sleeping Beauty* is providing the same "classroom" function in the Swedish repertoire as it has done for the English, its many classical solos and *ensembles* serving to strengthen the entire company.

An appealing touch came in the first act garland dance, with the inclusion of 16 children from the ballet school. Outstanding were the Lilac Fairy's fellow Godmothers — Birgit Grefveberg, Berit Skoeld, Kerstin Lust, Asa Hermansson, Yvonne Brosset — plus the evil Carabosse

MODERN AND NEO-CLASSIC: Left, Bjorn Holmgren, as the Young Man, and Yvonne Brosset, as the Virgin, in Akesson's The Rites. *Right, members of the Royal Swedish Ballet in the "Sanguine" mood from a revival of Balanchine's* Four Temperaments. *Photos: Enar Merkel Rydberg.*





of Teddy Rhodin, the Catalabutte of Sten-Thorsten Thuul, and the King and Queen of Scotland's Iain Montague and Anne-Marie Lagerborg.

The last act revue was danced well by all, but only Gerd Andersson's exquisite variation created excitement. Most satisfying were the swift dancing of Florestan and His Sisters, Gunnar Randin, Vera Kihlgren and Kerstin Lust, and the mimed Red Riding Hood and Wolf of Asa Hermansson and John Burman.

The two Balanchine ballets, *Four Temperaments* and *Symphony in C,* were staged here in March in just three weeks by Vida Brown, former ballet mistress of the New York City Ballet; and the Swedes learned their lessons well. They performed these difficult works cleanly and musically, with less ease but with more smiling verve than the New York dancers.

The pure lines demanded by the choreography and Hindemith score of *Four Temperaments* were most evident in the solo work of Bjorn Holmgren, of Orlando and Selling, and of Andersson and Verner Klavsen.

This same quintet sparkled through *Symphony in C,* with Holmgren and Gerd Andersson equalling the brio and *ballon* of New York City's Villella-Verdy combination in the *allegro vivace.* The Swedes stayed honest to Bizet. They bravely retained the *adagio* pace of the fugue — usually quickened at the City Center for the sake of the dancers — and the longer poses, the broadened movements gave this section an ecstatic quality.

The *corps de ballet,* as well, caught the distinctive Balanchine flavour, finding the happy medium between robotry, which occasionally afflicts the New York City Ballet, and the uncalled-for dramatics which tempts other companies.

The Swedish modern dancer, Birgit Akesson, is lucky to have a classical ballet company ready to experiment with her choreographic ideas. *The Rites* is hampered by its mixture of styles — modern, ballet, even Indian — but it was expertly danced and forcefully conveyed the pessimistic theme: "for mankind there is no way out; cruelty is permanent".

Aided by pounding *musique concrète,* grotesque décor and some lucid programme notes by the scenarist, Erik Lindegren, and despite the disturbing inconsistency in style, Akesson has created a powerful theatre piece. The Young Man, the frustrated idealist in Akesson's gloomy world, was sympathetically enacted by Bjorn Holmgren.

The Akesson outlook qualified her also to provide the choreography for *Aniara,* the Swedish opera by Karl-Birger Blomdahl which Covent Garden audiences will see this fall. This tale of a journey through space is intended to represent the spiritual void through which we trample in the present age. Akesson has contributed effective rock 'n' roll and bump 'n' grind numbers for the hedonists who ignore reality by dwelling only on pleasure. Her finest work is the flowing free movement for Isagel, who symbolises abstract beauty, or pure thought — a natural for the long beautiful line and lyricism of dark-haired Loulou Portefaix.

Pathos filled the lusty Nordic atmosphere of Birgit Cullberg's *The Moon Reindeer.* Mariane Orlando gave a stirring performance in her dual rôle, sad and longing as the knock-kneed, pigtailed adolescent, and proud, statuesque as the White Reindeer into which she's transformed. The Swedes capture the melancholy of this Lapp legend — the hopelessness of the unloved.

THE MOON REINDEER: Mariane Orlando as the White Reindeer, and Caj Selling as the boy she loves in Birgit Cullberg's The Moon Reindeer. *The Copenhagen version of this work was reviewed by Gene Palatsky in last month's* Dance and Dancers.
Photo: Enar Merkel Rydberg

Cullberg's *Miss Julie* was less successful. The talented, blonde Wiweka Ljung wove the tragic elements of Julie in a skilful dramatisation, but her dancing seemed unsure. Mario Mengarelli failed to cope with the subtleties of Jean, the butler.

Inspired as was Ninette de Valois for *The Rake's Progress,* John Cranko for *Harlequin in April* and Kenneth MacMillan for *Laiderette,* Ivo Cramér has devised a less-poetic but amusing sequence of scenes, based on the biblical wall paintings of Sweden's Dalarna peasants, for *The Prodigal Son.* Re-creating the spirit of this endearing folk art, which can be seen in Stockholm's Nordic Museum, Cramér has constructed a repertoire museum piece, accenting the Royal Swedes' gifts for comedy. But unimaginative choreography — wasting a fertile score by Hugo Alfvén — diminishes its artistic value and makes one conscious that the ballet is lasting 50 minutes. The versatile Bjorn Holmgren mimed and danced with innocent wonder as The Son.

STARS OF THE BOLSHOI

Continued from page 21.

choreographed by Vainonen, had an agreeable madness and plenty of spirit about it. It also included a most remarkable movement which a friend described as being an *"entrechat* from the neck downwards"!

The sea-green chiffon of Gorsky's *The Ocean and the Pearls* was most unpleasant, and the *pas de trois* itself is not likely to add very much lustre to Gorsky's reputation. (It comes, so I am told, from Gorsky's version of *The Little Humpbacked Horse.*) The Pugni music sounded trite, even though I must shame-facedly admit that I found myself humming it weeks after. During this second programme it was well danced by Fyedorova, Smirnova and Farmanyants. But during the last week the same three dancers, perhaps having got the measure of their audience, utilised this rather sad hack to give performances of astonishing, and ever-increasing virtuosity.

The programme continued with a finely danced Lully *Gavotte* by Timofeyeva, although I personally and probably pedantically dislike the idea of Lully being interpreted with point shoes. (I may also add that I preferred the more refined approach of Lesma Chadarein.) It seems a pity that Timofeyeva did not choose to give her wonderful solo from Chabukiani's *Laurencia.* As a grand, circus-style finale, Tikhomirnova and Begak threw themselves into Messerer's Moshkovsky *Waltz.* Here, Tikhomirnova, though not a Struchkova by a long chalk, came into her own and Begak partnered manfully.

The constant merit of the whole season was the splendid conducting of Georgii Zhemtuzhin, although a lot of the music he had to conduct was of a mediocre nature. Costumes by Western standards were very poor. Choreography by Western standards, although by no means as weak as some people have suggested, was equally not always of the highest level, and their way with the classics is cavalier to say the least.

Yet for all these sometimes glaring faults I would hesitate to call Soviet ballet decadent on the strength of these concert performances, conveniently setting aside the lessons we presumably learnt when the complete company appeared at Covent Garden. Personally, despite the initial disappointments, despite the unsuitability of the setting, and despite the often ill-planned programmes, I found these performances for the most part wildly exhilarating.

BALLET RAMBERT

Mixed Opening

THE opening programme of Rambert's two-week season at Sadler's Wells on July 18 was, in spite of the fact that Norman Morrice's new work did not quite come off, thoroughly entertaining — and ballet rarely entertains me any more.

John Cranko's *La Reja* could be the perfect programme-opener but somehow it isn't. Starting off with the promise of a study in decadence it develops into a rather pointless divertissement which is not diverting enough to override the fault in the work's basic structure. The best things about it are the Scarlatti music, Carl Toms' ominous designing, a solo by Lucette Aldous and the splendid style of all the dancers in the company.

It was a pity for *The Wise Monkeys,* that followed (reviewed in full on page 14), that it was followed in its turn by possibly the wittiest ballet in the current British repertory — namely Frank Staff's *Czernyana.* Created as it was twenty-one years ago, it seems to have been the John the Baptist, in the rôle of the fore-runner rather than the head-loser, of every dance scene in every egg-headed cellar revue ever since. It should never be out of the Rambert repertory though something could be done about the designing which is of the pastel-and-drapery school of the British 'thirties, a school I find that I have violently turned against owing to its inherent weakness and washiness. However, this does not matter too much as it is a big send-up of most styles of dance and also of many human foibles. Staff's barbed darts are directed most surely at Massine's "symphonic period" and I find *Trop Symphonique (Too, too symphonic)* one of the most hilarious instances of ballet laughing at itself. But all through, the audience is kept in a constant titter.

The highlights came with Aldous, charming and piquant in *M'as-tu Vue (See me dance),* Elsa Recagno as a droopy fairy in *Presque Classique (So nearly classical),* Kenneth Bannerman as a reluctant Don Juan in *Se Habla Español (Spanish spoken here)* and Norman Morrice as a bewildered wolf in *Visions* — but then all the company gave the ballet with an infectious sense of fun.

The final work was Morrice's last year winner — *Hazaña.* Even now I find it a moving piece of theatre in which the audience becomes involved to the extent that though we know how it will end there are still those moments of tension when we wonder if the man is really going to get the cross up into its niche — it somehow seems to matter a great deal. To engender tension even when everyone knows the outcome is, to my way of thinking, the hallmark of great theatre. Possibly the reason in this case is on account of the work's simplicity; it has been stripped of all excessive detail both choreographically and in the narrative.

A child loses faith in her father because he cannot shift a cross on to a church by himself and this makes him so determined that eventually he performs the seemingly impossible in achieving his goal — that's all. Yet there is a wealth of meaning there and all kinds of symbolism if you care to look for it — if you don't, then it is still good drama. John Chesworth gives a masterly performance of the Husband while Martlew is sexy and indolent as his wife. June Sandbrook, as their daughter gives a performance that has all the gawkiness and trust of adolescents. She is another of those Rambert artists, like Martlew and a whole string before them, who seem to bring sincerity and integrity to any rôle. **P. W.**

TWO PRINCESSES: Left, Claudia Cravey as the young Princess and, right, Violette Verdy as the older Princess in the musical love story in song and dance called The Princess. *This dance productuion which opens at the Strand Theatre on August 23 was a great success in Florida last year. The story is written and choreographed by Jo Anna, a South African who is married to American producer Ted Kneeland.*

The Tudor Evening

ONE never watches the Tudor programme with a feeling of satiety. Indeed anyone who sees all four works more than once a year can count himself fortunate. Provincial audiences don't care sufficiently about them, and, consequently, with the exception of *Gala Performance,* they are danced in London only with the following predictable results: at least one of the works will appear under-rehearsed, while the one which has suffered the fewest cast changes since last danced is almost bound to stand out as the best.

Lilac Garden was nearly as full of drama and pathos as it should be, but emotionally it did not quite ring true. Lucette Aldous brought technical virtuosity to the rôle of Caroline, and there is nothing wrong with that, for the rôle can be made as technical as the dancer's technique will allow. But it still must be presented with a complete emotional understanding of the character's unpalatable inner plight. She certainly presents the character with sincerity and there is nothing pat about her performance. She does, however, lack the rigidity of movement or the almost stilted quality which her predecessor Beryl Goldwyn, a more mature personality, used to display the strain of a character under the severe mental constraint of an imminent forced marriage.

At this performance there seemed to be a tendency for the dancers to depict their rôles in the form of interior monologues. While all were most genuinely recognisable personalities, helped, needless to say, by Tudor's expertly stylised everyday gestures, the dexterous interplay which the choreographer established between them was not always present. If the complex inter-relationships were more shadily defined than usual, it seems to me that the distribution of heights between John Chesworth as the Lover towering over Lucette Aldous and stretching out his hand in a rather avuncular way was even more unsatisfactory.

The toughness of the sleazy goddesses in *Judgment of Paris* is now not so thin for both Valerie Marsh (Minerva) and Elsa Recagno (Juno) have strengthened their interpretations. The hollowness underneath is exposed more theatrically, and Gillian Martlew as the hoop brandishing Venus no longer has it all her own way.

The company danced *Dark Elegies* earnestly and intelligently, as a collective experience if you like, though with varying degrees of success in the solos. Though Tudor made no attempt to graft a plot on to it the dancers conveyed quite clearly that their actions were developed from a scene of disaster. June Sandbrook in the First Song, to which I thought lack of experience prevented her doing much justice in the 1958 season, now gives one of the most substantial performances. She has shed all traces of the artificiality of a background of classical training. There is no slackening of tension, and she con-

MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY: Left, Princess Teo Xochitl and Javier de Leon who are the stars of the company recently at the Piccadilly Theatre. Right, members of the company in the Dance of the Quetzals. Both scenes come from the first part of the programme based on ancient Mayan and Aztec folklore. Photos: Roy Round

veys a sense of urgency, of sorrow, and of despair as she flings her heart to the ground in movements of heavy simplicity.

The boys are less satisfying. Kenneth Bannerman, who has vigorous *demi-caractère* possibilities, perhaps came nearest the theme's earthiness and one could even picture him mowing hay, and so on. But even here one would prefer his movements to be more starkly black-and-white in severity. In the Fifth Song, Norman Morrice appeared to be relying more on understanding than on technique, and he would surely leave a deeper impression if he could manage to make his dancing appear less negligently lightweight.

A pleasing feature of *Gala Performance* is that the front curtain prologue is very smooth indeed. It is well acted by all participants, the mime is less woolly and right on the music. The performance of Anna Truscott as the Muscovite ballerina is especially encouraging, and, moreover, she has a Toumanova-type profile. Though her dancing is still a little uneven, she already possesses an excellent understanding of the character, as shown by her amusing imperious expressions and impulsive cold-blooded behaviour. Lucette Aldous and Gillian Martlew repeated their clever portrayals of the piquant French and arrogant Italian ballerinas respectively, while John Chesworth, John O'Brien, Gordon Coster and Thelma Litster brought effective touches to the remaining principal rôles.

In recent seasons, however, the success of the Tudor ballets has depended so much on the performances of Gillian Martlew. In taking pains to find the right adjectives to describe the various newcomers to rôles, it is only too easy to take her contributions for granted. Let it be said that she is a complete artist with an extraordinary range of characterisations.

E. C. M.

THE MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY

WHAT with Mathilda Beauvoir's company showing Voodoo rites in the stately purlieus of Westminster and Javier de Leon and his Mexicans giving Aztec and Mayan rituals under the shadow of Eros, it looked as though the August holiday period of 1960 would produce the greatest anthropological get-together of all time — not, of course, forgetting Madame Rambert's sylphs fluttering around the Finsbury area. In the end it was the Rambert rituals that proved to be the most theatrically pungent.

I suppose it was the Filipinos and the Georgians who raised our hopes for what is irritatingly called "ethnic dance" presentation. I, for one, had high hopes for the Mexicans because I love both the music, culture and history of these people — on a bad day I just have to put an hour-load of Mexican records on the gramophone and grey days become sunny from then on, as they used to sing in early talkie musicals. Unfortunately, what the Mexican Dance Company showed at the Piccadilly Theatre, for a season starting on July 18, succeeded in making all this rich heritage remarkably uninteresting.

The costumes were spectacular and mainly gorgeous. The setting was simple and effective — wide expanse of sky and distant mountains giving the whole presentation the air of being performed on a high plateau — yet somehow the whole thing never quite clicked. Why?

In the first place I think that so little is really known about Mayan and Aztec dance and that paintings and sculptures are really not enough to evoke the true essence of the dance of ancient people. This is true of many ancient civilisations particularly those who have become more so-called "civilised" over the centuries. With the spread of Christianity and other supposedly sobering influences, the old dances become refined down until they are eventually lost altogether. It is only in the small remote tribes scattered over the face of the globe that the dance remains unaltered over the centuries — then it is dismissed by most people as being "heathen". All the exhaustive research in the world can never really recapture it for us.

Therefore, the first half of this programme — given over to the ancient side of Mexico's dance — hardly came alive. Obviously the various items were based on scenes and incidents from folk-lore but the movements seemed to be very limited and lacked any feeling of "school" such as you will find in Indian dance. Many of the scenes smacked of revue which may not have been so much the fault of Javier de Leon's choreography as the fact that his country's source material has proved a magnet for anyone putting on exotic scenes in revues and cabarets since such spectacles were first devised — certainly Zeigfield, Cochran and the French spectaculars had many "Montezuma" scenes in their archives. None of this matters so much from a purely theatrical point of view, as the fact that the company could produce no really outstanding personality. Neither Princess Teo Xochitl nor Javier de Leon himself nor Chief Tonalzin caused any quickening of the pulses during their many appearances and it remained with a popular singer, Aurelio Ochoa, in the second half to bring the nearest thing to star quality.

This second part was given over to more familiar ground — to regional dances and popular music — and was certainly the most attractive. The Michoacan dance in which young girls impersonate old men was particularly amusing and went down well with the audience as in fact did all the dances to lively rhythms such as the "Cucaracha". Many of the costumes were very splendid but here again I felt that there was something lacking in the production. There were far too many instrumental numbers, a lot of noisy brass and far too little actual dancing. There is so much wonderful material here that a really experienced producer could knock together into a highly stimulating and lively spectacle. Everybody who presents this kind of performance has to pose this question — "What kind of person is coming to see me?" If he decides that it is a dance public, and the fact that this company has "Dance" in its title suggests that this is the public Javier de Leon expected, then the programme should be all dance. If it becomes necessary to resort to vocal and instrumental items while the main body of dancers are changing their

costumes, then these items should be presented in an interesting way either as a little scene or with possibly one dancer.

Any dance spectacle must have a flow of dance right through it with each part of the programme gradually building up to a climax. If you cast your mind back to the folklore productions of the past ten years it will be found that the only really successful ones have been those that understood this primary fact. **P. W.**

VOODOO

A PAIR of white doves, near dead with fright and not at all like the ones which used to bill and coo so lovingly in *White Horse Inn,* a sheep which not only preferred to display its rear rather than face to the audience, but which behaved thoughtlessly, and a fierce rooster which made an ugly screeching scene and showered those sitting not so snugly in the stalls with black feathers. Such are the properties used by Mathilda Beauvoir's Voodoo dancers. At the end of the performance — during which they had also consumed a picnic lunch — the stage of the dear little Westminster Theatre was as tidy as that of an Irish snug at closing time on a Saturday. This company is certainly very different, and though it would go against our inherent seriousness, one is almost tempted to treat it flippantly.

The programme itself has more structure on paper than in actual performance, and there were moments when I felt that either an item had been left out or two had been combined. But then I'm not well up on the secret cults of Haiti, which, incidentally, the publicity handout states, are now practised much more openly.

Voodoo runs parallel with, and counter to, the official Catholicism imposed when Haiti was a French possession (1697-1804). The pagan rites were brought from West Africa — the Dahomey coast, to be precise — with the slaves of the 18th century and became intermingled with the island's other cultures. Voodoo is used in some ways to supplement Christianity as a protection against evil, and there is a considerable amount of overlapping between the African demi-gods (the loas), who act as intermediaries between the worshippers and the deity much as our Christian saints do, and the Christian saints themselves. Thus, Damballah the Serpent God is depicted in Haitian art as St. Patrick with crook and mitre driving the snakes into the set; Hogou the Warrior God appears as St. James on a white charger, while Papa Legba, with his key, may be likened to our St. Peter. The evil spirits, on the other hand, appear to originate from a purely pagan mythology.

In the performance, the Mambo, or Voodoo Princess (Mme Beauvoir herself) acts as Mistress of Ceremonies and appears before a bamboo altar to summon the various spirits to descend and take possession of the dancers. Invocations to the "good" spirits comprise the first half, while the more lively second half is devoted to rites conducted to ten "evil" spirits.

The production has not been decorated with the *chic* Bernard Daydé imposed on the Ballets Africains, but then it never approaches cabaret. Regarding the actual staging, it in no way approximates the polish with which the Bayanihan Filipino company presented its material, and, perhaps a more sensible comparison, Mme Beauvoir's production hand is infinitely shakier than that of Katherine Dunham, who has a much surer sense of the theatrical.

One of the qualities, however, which Mme Beauvoir captures is intimacy, but an intimacy which is so disturbing that you feel an intruder witnessing such a spectacle. The presentation is, in fact, too uncomfortably realistic and authentic; there is not a trace of the stylisation which can go to produce art out of folk-lore material, and, moreover, most of the performers fling themselves into their trances and frenzied incantations in a manner which is obviously too private to be consistently entertaining.

Everything is mixed up with anthropology, but unadulterated anthropology is not necessarily entertainment, and there were too many moments when Mme Beauvoir left the impression that she had forgotten she was in a theatre.

Business men may find the odd exposed breast titillating, though there is nothing especially erotic about this curious manifestation, not even when one of the girls holds a top hat in front of her near nude loins with touching modesty in her invocation to Baron Samedi, the principal Guédé god. The girls, who dominate the programme, are all snake-hips, vibrations and convulsions, while the men tend to mooch about, stare blankly or grin nonchalantly.

The dances are simple and there is no disciplined vocabulary of movement. There is no precision, and the stamping, jigging, running and shuffling, the jostling and the knocking each other sideways, to percussive hand-claps and throbbing tom-toms, grunts, groans, shrieks, chanting and the odd sentences spoken in Creole, leave behind an impression that at least three-quarters of the items are improvised on the spot. **E. C. M.**

HINTLESHAM FESTIVAL

A thunderstorm which put out of action the recording and lighting system, plus a heavy fall of rain just before the performance causing flooding of the stage, meant the cancellation of the première of Keith Beckett's ballet *The Vision and the Fool* on July 22. The large and disappointed audience braving the inclement weather strolled instead through lovely Hintlesham Hall, home of Mr. Anthony Stokes, admiring the special Sickert exhibition in the Long Gallery, the paintings by various well-known and local artists and the exhibition of Suffolk arts and crafts. They returned however the next day, when the weather relented, and the performances took place as arranged.

If Hintlesham may be termed the balletic Trimalchio's Feast of rural Suffolk, I think one might say Beckett's ballet was more in the nature of a very appetising *hors d'oeuvre* than a full course, which was a pity for he seemed to have all the ingredients necessary for a much more substantial offering; a deep appreciation of musical values, a strong sense of *ensemble* arrangement, beauty of line and — Marina Svetlova as the Vision.

The ballet, to music by Dag Wiren and Lars-Erik Larsson, tells of a crippled fool unable to dance with the villagers and mocked by them. He has a vision, and in his dreams becomes a strong and fit man able to join in with his companions. On their return he endeavours to show them, only to find with the vision gone it was just a dream and he is a cripple.

Whether necessitated by the music, or by the fear of tiring his audience, I don't know, but it seemed to me Keith Beckett told his story too quickly and his finale was on us before one realised that it was indeed the end. This was a great pity for this 18-20 minute ballet could well have been extended by another ten minutes at least, such was the inventiveness of the choreography. I liked particularly the *ensemble* work in the *pas de six,* spirited yet classical in conception, and well danced by the young dancers under conditions hardly those of a normal theatre. As the Fool, Beckett himself gave pathos to the rôle, the dancing requirements of which were slight, but his *pas de deux* with Svetlova was beautifully conceived and performed. Svetlova herself scored a double triumph, not only did she look extremely beautiful but her dancing was a delight to watch; she might easily have been on the stage of the Metropolitan, New York, so effortless and assured was her dancing, yet without that hardness that so often accompanies American ballerinas.

The supporting programme consisted of varied *pas seul, pas de deux* and *ensembles* from the classics, together with modern

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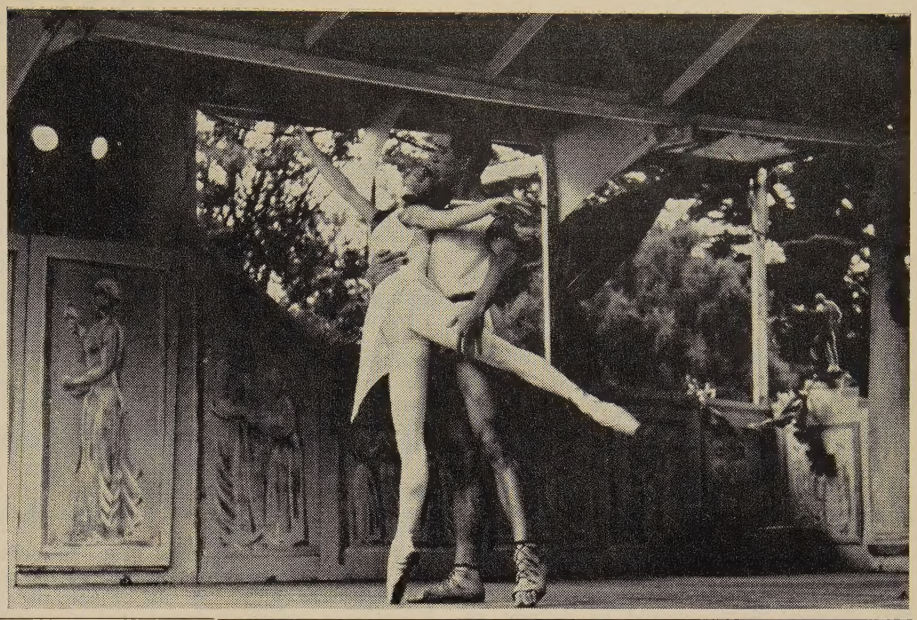
works, and I particularly liked one youngster, Michael Walker, who danced a "modern" number with a sense of rhythm and looseness of limb — yet with perfect control — that left one wishing for more. Of great interest to me was the Georgian dance performed by Anatolij Nakashidzge, recently granted political asylum in this country. With its intricate point work (danced in unblocked shoes) and vigorous swirling movements, it was however a dance more for the connoisseur than the general public, and did not I felt get the reception it deserved.

Despite poor and distorted amplification and the various difficulties attendant upon any open-air performance, this year's Hintlesham Festival will go down as yet a further step forward in what we hope is now a regular annual event.

Bernard Peacock.



NEW BALLET FOR HINTLESHAM: Marina Svetlova and Keith Beckett rehearse his new work, The Vision and the Fool, *which had its première at the Hintlesham Festival in Suffolk.*
Photo: Gilbert Hawker

THE WISE MONKEYS

Continued from page 15.

as much attention to his own portrayal as he could have done. His acting was very careful, almost to the point of over-subtlety, and quite lacking in the broad effects he contrives in the *Two Brothers.* Possibly it would be an idea if he put John Chesworth in this rôle, making at the same time a few changes in the choreography and characterisation.

The title rôles were all quite capably done, with Chesworth, Kenneth Bannerman and Gordon Coster making the most of the rather heavy-handed humour.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

THE old question of whether the hen or the egg came first always crops up in terms of choreography and music whenever a choreographer decides to use existing music for a new ballet. Either he can let the music shape the course of his balletic imagination, or, very rarely, he can twist the music to suit what he already has in mind — if, that is, the music is twistable. Short pieces can be stitched together in almost any pattern, although there is no guarantee that the result will be artistically effective, but it is still not sufficiently realised in ballet that a single organically-composed work determines its own character and development.

A choreographer who flouts what is implicit in the music can devise the most brilliant dancing in the world, but the result will not be a ballet in the fullest and really the only valid sense. That Norman Morrice has plenty of essential musicality was evident in the effective use he made of the Carlos Surinach score for *Hazaña* last year, where two works were hinged together to give lyrical and dramatic cogency to the ballet. Part of the reason why *The Wise Monkeys* is less successful lies, to my mind, in the choice of music and the use Morrice makes of it.

His choice is the Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings, Op. 35, composed by Shostakovitch in 1933, and Morrice has said quite definitely that it was the music which suggested the ballet to him. Here was a fundamental error of taste that only a choreographer of genius could have overcome. As music, the concerto is quite blatantly vulgar; a good deal of it sounds like nothing so much as a parody of Offenbach by Prokofiev at his most cynical. It is the kind of work that needs the keenest of choreographic wit to redeem it, and even then I am not at all sure that a ballet could rise much above the music's level.

Morrice has fallen a victim to its burlesque qualities, even outstripping it at times such as the introduction of the bottle and the subsequent drunken episode during the slow movement, when the music does achieve some lyrical merit. The last-movement trumpet solo, which sounds for all the world like a cornet played outside a pub, could no doubt serve for some kind of low comedy, but the fist fight it matches in the ballet is treated with deadly seriousness. In the end, the music merely served to emphasise the stylistic indecision of dancing that, to me, hovered uncertainly between sentimentality and farce.

It was adequately played for the little it was worth by the Rambert Orchestra under David Ellenberg, with Cyril Preedy as the pianist and Norman Archibald the penetrating solo trumpet. With strings so thin on the ground, however, the deliberate contrasts of texture the composer intended failed to make their effect, and much of the performance sounded more like a duet between the soloists than a concerto. Altogether the presentation was something of a cautionary tale for choreographers in search of music.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

THIS is the first designing for ballet by a young man, Ralph Adron, whom attentive readers may remember as being one of the students of the Slade School. His first assignment has not been an easy one for the work is a slender comedy which whether written, composed, choreographed, painted or designed is something that balances delicately on a tightrope. Any lack of balance must inevitably lead to a nasty whump — sometimes even a fatal whump — and the designer is on far more level ground when having to cope with drama and tragedy.

There are two ways in which the designer can approach a comedy ballet — he can either let his settings and costumes become wholly involved in the antics as did, for instance, André Derain in his masterly chinoiserie for *L'Epreuve d'Amour* and other works, or else he can stand apart and create an environment that is realistic so that the humour is derived from the fact that behaviour is eccentric in a plausible setting we can all recognise. I think that where Adron has not quite succeeded is that he has used both these approaches without arriving at any one destination.

His costumes for the two older and more dissolute lovers are almost completely realistic while his two younger and almost innocent ones are more stylised and he has, therefore, created a lack of relationship between the two parties. This seems to me to throw the ballet rather off balance because one ought to have been able to believe in all the four human characters. The designing for these four was also the least satisfactory part of Adron's work because it was heavy-handed. Martlew, as the experienced lady, wears a "fatale" magenta dress with some rather bulky fringing swathed across it while the gentleman "well acquainted with her" has a conventional roué's green fur-collared overcoat which is a cumbersome garment for dancing. I presume that Lucette Aldous's near-flesh coloured dress was intended to give her a nude look not inappropriate, of course, for bathing, though hardly in keeping with her supposed innocence. Anyway, it fitted very badly and her young swain seemed more like a fugitive from the crowd scenes of one of those epic films monotonously and unceasingly made in Rome. It would seem from this that students of ballet design should pay far greater attention to human anatomy and its complete range of movement in dance.

But with the more abstract elements of the ballet, Adron seemed far happier. His two sets of monkeys, representing the consciences of the boy and the girl, were witty and I liked their pagoda silhouette which gave them a feeling of Chinese fantasy. While the boy's monkeys were all the same in turquoise breeches, white jackets and simian suggestion in their black arms, legs and close-fitting headdresses, I could not quite see why the girl monkeys had each to be in different pastel colours.

Leaving the best till the last, as Nannie used to insist whenever I tried to eat the sweet before the then-hated meat course, and Adron has achieved an admirable setting. In his terracotta surround with smudged white aqueous and arboreal

motives and his two brown pavilions, sort of casas of consciences, he has brought about the exact lightness of touch that a comedy ballet needs. It was elegant and gay without being in any way twee. It was such a good setting that it is slightly disappointing that the principal costumes were less interesting. It was the sort of set that could take almost any colour you like to put against it and if Ballet Rambert ever decides to drop this ballet, I would suggest that they keep this setting in store against the day when they may need it again — possibly for an abstract ballet. Now I come to think of it, what an excellent set it would make for *Czernyana*. But whatever the faults of the design as it now stands, it is a worthy first attempt at this complex form of designer's art and it is much to the credit of Ballet Rambert that they have made it their business to give young designers a chance to get their work on the stage.

Peter Williams.

BONAPARTE A NICE

Continued from page 17.

such yards of cheap musical tarlatan, but that Festival Ballet should be content to accept it, pay for it and actually make use of it. The disturbing implication is that Festival Ballet either cannot or does not want to distinguish between bargain-basement and *haute-couture*. As I wrote of *London Morning* last year, the company is perfectly free to indulge a preference for pigs in pokes if it chooses, but it is not then entitled to expect continued serious consideration as an artistic enterprise.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

ONLY the most decrepit of us can remember the Chauve-Souris, that lively Russian revue presided over by the ebullient Nikita Balieff whose atrocious English was one of the many delights that this enchanting entertainment had to offer. The many scenes were ingenius, inventive and exquisitely designed and they set a standard that was later maintained by Cochran and later still by almost everyone else until revue took to the cellars and the "kitchen chair" school. In one of the editions of the Chauve-Souris there was a delightful number of the Napoleonic period, *Amour et Hiérarchie*, and it was designed by Nicolas Benois. It had just that tiny amount of exaggeration that gave it wit and piquancy.

André Levasseur is not a designer of this school; he is one of the most lavish decorators of "occasions" that there is around these days and the choice of him to decorate Lifar's *pièce d'occasion* in celebration of Nice's annexation by France a hundred years ago was a curious one.

The trouble, amongst a mountain of troubles, is the lack of determination on the part of the audience, the dancers and, possibly, even the choreographer as to whether it is intended to be comic or not. Certain features would seem to suggest that it is, then others occur that make it apparent that it is not — in the end it is neither. If nobody is sure, then what is the poor designer to do.

When the work opens, the brooding figure of the young Napoleon and the tableau of soldiers in the Place de la République creates a mood that gives rise to the belief that something in the nature of a chronicle ballet is about to take place. A few moments later a string of lady cavaliers cross the stage on hobby-horses and immediately the original mood is shattered. Whether this was Lifar's idea or Levasseur's I would not know and of course in France this might be a highly original device, stemming as it does from ancient secular drama; in England this inevitably conjures up those troups of cute juveniles who have galloped on for since only Dan Leno could know when whenever patriotic or equestrian scenes are called for in almost every English Christmas pantomime. They were, in fact, well designed on this occasion but the idea only caused confusion in the minds of the audience. Even worse was the fact that shortly after this troupe of mild amazons had appeared, they were followed by Napoleon making the same kind of entrance. An added embarrassment was that he eventually stepped out of the horse and it looked sad, deflated and utterly absurd on the ground. The uniforms for the undisciplined Napoleonic soldiers and the comic gendarmes were good in costume-plate way but they could all have been given a touch of fantasy.

All attempt at seriousness was utterly dispelled by the appearance, in the second scene, of a bevy of Orange-tree Maidens in blue all-over tights with minor embellishments and each bearing a miniature orange tree in a tub. These they *bouréed* with or posed against and the whole thing composed a spectacle at which human comprehension boggled — as if it hadn't had enough to boggle at already.

The one interesting feature of the whole designing was in the mechanics of the setting — a Disneyland-sized Place de la République was opened out bookwise by the dancers themselves until it formed the formal clipped hedges of Count Laurenti's garden. An ingenius method of quick-change on a stage such as Festival Hall possesses, but hardly impressive if you happen to have seen Sean Kenny's brilliant moving constructions in *Oliver* a few nights before (this you *must* see if you have any interest in stage design at all — and even if you haven't).

The lighting on the night I saw the ballet, the opening night of the season, was so bad that I missed the whole of Dolin's first appearance as Count Laurenti and it was not until the third scene and the ballet's closing seconds that I realised that he was in the opus at all.

In fact the only two things that gave the ballet any sort of "Levasseur" signature were in the simple, elegant and high-waisted costume for Marilyn Burr as Angella and the opulent scarlet, black and gold livery for a blackamoor valet played by Vassilie Trunoff.

Usually even a mediocre ballet can be pulled through by Levasseur's designing — but on this occasion not even all the Queen's hobby horses nor all the Queen's men could put this addled egg together again — even if anybody wanted it. **P. W.**

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET (Touring Company)
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

August
20 **(M)** *Solitaire, Coppélia* (Anderton).
20 **(E)** *Coppélia* (Park, Burne), *Façade*.
22 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Page, Hynd).
23 *Pineapple Poll, La Fête Etrange, Sweeney Todd*.
24 *Solitaire, Blood Wedding, Sweeney Todd*.
25 *Pineapple Poll, La Fête Etrange, Don Quixote pas de deux, Façade*.
26 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge).
27 **(E)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Seymour, Doyle).
End of Covent Garden season.
29 Theatre Royal, Nottingham.
September
5 Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.
12 Theatre Royal, Newcastle.
19 His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen.
26 Kings Theatre, Glasgow.
October
3 The Lyceum, Sheffield.
10 The Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool.
17 The Opera House, Manchester.
24 The Grand Theatre, Leeds.
31 The New Theatre, Oxford (2 weeks).
November
14 The Hippodrome, Bristol.
21 The Pavilion, Bournemouth.
28 The Hippodrome, Brighton.

BALLET RAMBERT
August
22 The Kings Theatre, Southsea.
29 The New Theatre, Cardiff.
September
5 The Hippodrome, Bristol.
12 The Hippodrome, Golders Green.
19 The Streatham Hill Theatre, Streatham Hill.
26 The Marlow Theatre, Canterbury.
October
3 The Theatre Royal, Bath.
10 The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham.
17 The Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
31 The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.
November
7 The Opera House, Belfast.
14 The Theatre Royal, Nottingham.
21 The New Theatre, Hull.
28 The Theatre Royal, Huddersfield.

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET
at the Royal Festival Hall, London

August
18-20 *Napoli, Symphony for Fun, Bourrée Fantasque* (Première).
25-29 *Swan Lake* Act 2, *Romeo and Juliet, Grand Pas de Deux, London Morning*.
30 *Giselle, Prince Igor*.
31 **(M)** *Swan Lake* Act 2, *Romeo and Juliet, Grand Pas de Deux, Prince Igor*.
31 **(E)** *Giselle, Prince Igor*.
September
2-3 *Swan Lake* Act 2, *Bonaparte, Graduation Ball*.
5-7 *Napoli, Symphony for Fun, Bourrée Fantasque*.
8 11th Birthday Gala.
9-10 *Coppélia*.
12-14 *Les Sylphides, Etudes, London Morning*.
15-17 *Swan Lake* Act 2, *The Pas de Quatre, Variations for Four, Bourrée Fantasque*.
The company will embark on a provincial tour at the end of October. Details to be announced.

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET
August
22 Olympia Theatre, Dublin.
29 The Empire Theatre, Belfast.
September
5 The Essoldo, Southport.
12 The Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
19 The Hippodrome, Stockton-on-Tees.
26 The Civic Theatre, Scunthorpe.
October
3 The Playhouse, Oxford.
10 to November 4. Tour throughout Holland.
November
7-28 Tour of the West Country of England.

BALLETS AFRICAINS OF GUINEA
August 15 to September 3 at the Piccadilly Theatre,

THE LITTLE BALLET TROUPE OF INDIA
at the Scala Theatre, September 12-17

HARLEQUIN BALLET
September
17 Thoresby Hall, Sherwood Forest.
22 Reascliff Hall, Folkestone.
23 The Town Hall, Battersea.
October
7 The Winter Gardens, Ventnor.
8 The District Arts Association, Cowes.
27 The Society of Arts, Wednesbury.

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL
at the Empire Theatre

August **The Royal Ballet**
22-24 *Danses Concertantes, Le Baiser de la Fée, Petrushka*.
25-27 *Ballabile, La Pèri* or *Raymonda, Prince of the Pagodas* Act 3.
29-30 Susana and Jose
2-3 The Little Ballet Troupe of India
Ballet Européen (Massine's Nervi company)
5-7 *Schéhérazade, Choreartium, Le Beau Danube*.
8-10 *The Decameron*.

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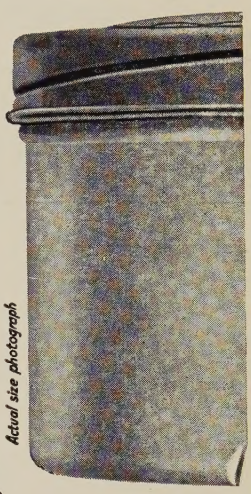

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